

# Critique of the Emperor in the Vatican Psalter gr. 752

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It goes without saying that Byzantine imperial images were most often idealized images of glorification, strictly laudatory in purpose. Yet the idea that the Byzantines were also capable of using images as tools of critical commentary aimed at the emperor has met with some resistance.<sup>1</sup> Today we take for granted that certain types of images act as political commentary in the form of caricatures, cartoon strips, posters, or billboards. It is inconceivable that in an autocratic society like that of Byzantium this type of open critique could exist. The opportunities were indeed limited. However, we should not underestimate the creativity of certain sectors of society in using what was available to them as a means of critique. Granted this critique had to be veiled to some extent, which is why it is often difficult for us to detect. Something to keep in mind is that the Byzantines were not strangers to the possibilities of polyvalent images. The extent of this polyvalency has not been sufficiently explored in Byzantine art. Images that may appear conventional or generic can also carry a more specific subtext, not necessarily meant for general consumption. One of the possible subtexts could be a commentary on contemporary issues.

When considering scenes of biblical narrative, the traditional polyvalency of the text itself should not be forgotten.<sup>2</sup> As a lyrical rather than a narrative text, the psalms in particular lend themselves to creative interpretation. In the same way, psalter illustration is a special case in Byzantine art in that the text permits a certain degree of freedom of expression. The images are interpretations as opposed to illustrations of a specific story. The interpreter can use the text in any number of ways to create the images that best serve his needs and intentions. For example, as Tikkanen first noted, in the ninth century the Iconophiles exploited the freedom of illustration permitted by the psalms to express their position through the marginal images of the psalter.<sup>3</sup> In general, few have studied this use of images for critical and timely commentary. But there is no

<sup>1</sup>For example, L. A. Gavrilovic ("The Humiliation of Leo VI the Wise," *CahArch* 28 [1979], 87–94) and A. Schmink ("Rota tu volubilis—Kaisermacht und Patriarchenmacht in Mosaiken," in *Cupido Legum*, ed. L. Burgmann, M.-T. Fögen, and A. Schmink [Frankfurt, 1985], 211–34), resist the argument of a political event which could have brought about the iconography of the Leo mosaic in Hagia Sophia, as suggested by N. Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic of Saint Sophia," *DOP* 30 (1976), 151–72.

<sup>2</sup>A rich exegetical tradition made it standard practice to interpret the Bible literally, metaphorically, typologically, etc.

<sup>3</sup>J. J. Tikkanen, *Die Psalterillustration im Mittelalter* (Helsingfors, 1895–1900; repr. Soest, 1975), 78ff. Fully explored most recently by K. Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge, 1992).

reason for surprise at the discovery of a type of polemicizing in images which we already know from numerous polemical texts. Nevertheless, gaining access to the “visual text” contained in the images may not always be easy.

One manuscript that challenges us to decipher the “visual text” is a mid-eleventh-century psalter with commentary in the Vatican library, Vat. gr. 752.<sup>4</sup> It is a large manuscript (33.5 × 27 cm) that had close to five hundred folios and more than two hundred miniatures, all painted on gold leaf. The text contained in the manuscript consists of Paschal tables (fol. 1r–2v), prefaces to the Book of Psalms by early church fathers (fol. 3r–16v), dedicatory verses (fol. 17r–17v), the psalms and their catena (fol. 19r–449r), and the odes and canticles (fol. 450r–491v). The dedicatory poem reads as follows:

Ο πάντα κόσμον ἐν λόγῳ κτίσας πάλαι·  
 καὶ νῦν δὲ σῷζων ὡς φιλάν(θρωπ)ος φύσει·  
 τῇ σωστικῇ σου δέσποτ(α) προμηθείᾳ·  
 σύμπραττε τῷ γράψαντι καὶ κεκτημένῳ·  
 ἐν σοὶ γάρ ἔστιν ἡ βροτῶν σωτηρία·  
 δαυΐτηκῃ πέφυκα δέλτος ἀσμάτων·  
 φέρουσα τῷ γράψαντι φέρτατον κλέος·  
 θεόγραφον χάριν δὲ τῷ κεκτημένῳ·  
 καὶ μανθάνουσιν εὐκλεᾶ τὴν καρδίαν·  
 κ(αὶ) τοῖς βλέπουσιν ἐνθεεστάτους νόσας  
 ψάλλουσι δ’ ἄσμα πν(εύματο)ς χοοηγία(ν)·  
 ἀλλὰ κινῶν δ Δα(υὶ)δ ἐμμελῶς τὴν κινύραν·  
 τὸ τὸν Σαοὺλ ἔφευγε πνεῦμα συστρέφον·  
 ἄδοντες ἡμεῖς ψαλμικοτάτους λόγους·  
 ἐχφρῶν νοητῶν συμπατοῦμεν τὰς κάρας·  
 τοῦ πν(εύματο)ς τὰ θεῖα τόξα κ(αὶ) βέλη  
 τείνας δ Δα(υὶ)δ ψαλμοκινήτῳ λύρᾳ·  
 ἅπασαν ὄντως πρὸς βολὴν ἐναντίαν·  
 βάλλει τιτρώσκει κ(αὶ) διώκει κ(αὶ) τρέπει·  
 πιστῶν δὲ πά(ν)των πρὸς θ(εὸ)ν πτεροῖ φρένας·  
 καὶ τῶν χαμεροπῶν ἔξανιστῷ φρο(ν)τίδων·  
 πρὸς τὴν ἐν ἔργοις ψυχικὴν σωτηρίαν.<sup>5</sup>

The text throughout the manuscript is written in two columns. In the psalter proper, the inner column, written in large capitals, is always occupied by the text of the psalms, while the catena, written in smaller letters, occupies the outer column.<sup>6</sup> The catena is made up of excerpts taken from commentaries on the psalter by early church fathers and other patristic writers,<sup>7</sup> and have been combined to form a continuous exposition on the psalms.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>E. T. De Wald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint, III, Psalms and Odes, Part 2: Vaticanus Graecus 752* (Princeton, 1942).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., xii, with English translation.

<sup>6</sup>For a reproduction of a full page (containing miniatures and text), see K. Lake, *Dated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1200*, VIII (Boston, 1937), pls. 526–27; cf. K. Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex* (Princeton, 1947), pl. xxxiv, fig. 108.

<sup>7</sup>Commentaries by the following writers are quoted: Apollinaris, Arethas, Asterios, Athanasios, Basilios, Cyrillos, Didymos, Diodoros, Ephraem, Eusebios, Gregory Nazianzenus, Hesychios, John Chrysostom, Olympiodoros, Origen, Severus, and Theodoret. R. Devreesse, *Codices Vaticanani Graeci, II: Codices 604–866* (Rome, 1950), 267.

<sup>8</sup>In the catalogue of the extant Greek catenae prepared by G. Karo and I. Lietzmann, the catena of Vat. gr. 752 belongs to type XXII. “Catenarum Graecarum catalogus,” *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft*

Each section of the manuscript is richly illustrated.<sup>9</sup> However, it is not only the richness of the illustration which makes the manuscript noteworthy. Striking is the fact that unlike the illustrations of other psalters, the illustrations accompanying the text of the psalms tend to be inspired by the commentaries rather than the psalms themselves. The placement of the miniatures in the catena column further emphasizes their connection with the commentary. One miniature accompanies each psalm, usually placed at the beginning of the commentary. Only a few psalms are without a miniature, in which case the preceding psalm has an additional miniature placed at the end of the commentary. Most of the miniatures include inscriptions which in most cases derive their text, at least in part, from the commentaries. It is important to note here that the catena was put together specifically for this manuscript. This study will demonstrate that the selection of the commentary texts was a calculated part of the overall planning of the manuscript, designed in part to provide appropriate material for the miniatures. The miniatures, however, do not illustrate the commentary in a literal sense, but rather use ideas and phrases from the commentary as a springboard for the creation of the illustrations. Ernest T. De Wald in his publication of the miniatures transcribed all the legible inscriptions and in many cases identified the commentaries to which they relate.

Little is known about the origin and history of the manuscript. However, since the Paschal tables run from 1059 to 1090, it is safe to date the production of the manuscript to 1058/9. The identities of the scribes, artists, and patron of the manuscript are not disclosed anywhere. In the dedicatory verses, the scribe asks simply that God “assist the scribe and the owner” (line 4). According to a fourteenth/fifteenth century inscription on the bottom of folio 2r, the manuscript was at one time in the possession of a monastery of Pantanassa. Since the sixteenth century the manuscript has been in the Vatican Library, catalogued as codex Vaticanus 752.<sup>10</sup>

There is nothing irregular in the composition and overall appearance of the miniatures, but on closer examination one discovers a number of oddities which up until now have remained unexplained. For example, a certain anachronistic form of representation is employed in which Old Testament figures interact with bishops in the interior of a church or, equally anomalous, Christ appears with David in a narrative rather than in a typological scenario. Furthermore, the Old Testament figures and bishops, often identified by name, are unusual characters in the repertoire of psalter imagery, even in Byzantine art in general. For instance, the sons of Korah are given an unprecedented prominence throughout the manuscript’s illustrations. They are accompanied in certain scenes by the even more unusual figures of saints Silvester, Amphiliocios, and Arethas.<sup>11</sup> The viewer is perplexed to discover that the actions in which these figures are

*der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philologisch-historische Klasse (1902), 58–59. Another manuscript which belongs to this type is a 12th-century psalter in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (codex Canonicianus gr. 62). The Bodleian codex and Vat. gr. 752 have the very same catena to psalms 1 through 103:9. However, from psalm 103:10 onward the catenae diverge. See also I. Hutter, “Oxford Marginalien,” *JÖB* 29 (1980), 331–54, with additional bibliography.

<sup>9</sup>The Paschal tables are decorated with linked medallions depicting scenes from David’s youth. Small illustrations are also scattered throughout the text of the prefaces to the psalms and, following the dedicatory verses there are scenes from the Feast cycle.

<sup>10</sup>In the catalogue of the Greek manuscripts of the Vatican Library compiled by Federico Ranaldi (1590) the manuscript was listed as no. 484. De Wald, *Vat. gr. 752*, ix.

<sup>11</sup>The following publications discuss the presence of saints in 11th-century psalter illustrations. L. Marès, “L’irruption des saints dans l’illustration du psautier byzantin,” *AnalBoll* 68 (1950), 153–62. S. Der

engaged are not part of a narrative contained in either the psalter text or the commentary. Thus, the source of this “story” must be sought outside of the manuscript. This article will attempt to locate this source in the events of the mid-eleventh century. It will be proposed that the illustrations, by recalling certain contemporary events or timely concepts through the use of Old Testament and other characters and their juxtaposition, comment on church-state relations of the day. This commentary, constructed through the images, is further elucidated by inscriptions.

As De Wald has noted, it is peculiar that, in contrast to other psalter illustrations, David appears only twice as a prophet in Vat. gr. 752. Much more frequently, he is shown prostrate at the feet of Christ. In the majority of representations, David stands before a church or altar as a suppliant, often joined by figures such as the sons of Korah. Also differing from standard psalter illustration, few New Testament scenes appear within the text. Indeed, when Christ appears, it is rarely within the context of the Gospel narrative. Instead he appears quite frequently in various unexplained interactions with David, such as sitting at a table with David and the sons of Korah or standing and addressing David.

These anomalous illustrations cannot help but arouse the viewer’s curiosity. They seem quite deliberate in their use of uncanonical iconography as a way to express certain concerns or issues specific to the creators of the images. The carefully chosen inscriptions were obviously meant to give the viewer access to what would be otherwise very puzzling images within the Byzantine norm of representation. Nevertheless, despite the careful and copious use of inscriptions, the images would have remained, to a large extent, cryptic to most Byzantine viewers as they have been to us today. The manuscript itself provides evidence indicating that at least part of its story was meant to be intelligible to an informed few. Within the dedicatory poem, lines 6–11 allude to an intended audience:

I, the Davidic book of Odes having been created,  
bring most excellent fame to the writer,  
God-written grace to the owner,  
a glorified heart to those who understand [μανθάνουσιν]  
and to those who perceive [βλέποντας] most divine thoughts  
while singing the psalm, the celebration of the spirit.<sup>12</sup>

The desire to imbue the manuscript with a special message is further evidenced by the inclusion of a letter written by Athanasios (d. 373) to King Marcellinus, in which he advocates reinterpretation of the psalm text so as to fit specific and even personal occasions in one’s life.<sup>13</sup> According to Athanasios, a person using the psalter “can select a psalm suited to every occasion and thus will find that they [the psalms] were written for

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Nersessian, *L’Illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge*, II: Londres, Add. 19.352 (Paris, 1970). A. Cutler, “Liturgical Strata in the Marginal Psalters,” *DOP* 34–35 (1980–81), 17–30. However, unlike the cases examined by these authors, the presence of the saints in Vat. gr. 752 cannot be explained through a commemorative or liturgical connection with the psalms they illustrate, nor are they part of the commentary text.

<sup>12</sup>See poem above, lines 6–11.

<sup>13</sup>Fols. 12r through 16v, De Wald, *Vat. gr. 752*, xii. Athanasios’ letter is published in PG 27, cols. 12ff.

him.”<sup>14</sup> A miniature (fol. 12r) illustrates the author writing the letter and its presentation by a messenger to the king (Fig. 1). As in the dedicatory verses, the concept of instruction is presented in connection with the psalms; this is by no means unusual. However, one should note that it is specifically a king who is in need of this instruction.

The psalter can be called, in some sense, a “royal text,” being the utterances of David, the archetypal king. The Byzantine tradition of associating the emperor with David is a long one. The earliest surviving example in art is the famous set of David plates from seventh-century Cyprus, convincingly associated with the emperor Heraklios.<sup>15</sup> Later, during the reign of Basil I in the ninth century, this analogy is again exploited.<sup>16</sup> From this period on we have evidence that the concept of the emperor as a new David becomes an entrenched part of imperial ideology, as reflected in court ceremonial.<sup>17</sup> By the eleventh century, this association of David and the emperor was commonplace.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to decipher the messages encoded in this manuscript, it is necessary to explore the historical and cultural environment in which it was produced. The Paschal tables anchor the date of its production to the year 1058/9. In the years preceding 1059 a number of cataclysmic events had taken place. In June of 1042 the empress Zoe entered into her third—technically uncanonical—marriage. The man chosen was the aristocrat Constantine Monomachos who, to further complicate matters, was also marrying for the third time.

During Constantine IX’s rule the clash of personalities involving the ambitious patriarch Michael Keroularios resulted in the schism with the Latin church in 1054. A group of legates led by Cardinal Humbert came to Constantinople in April 1054 to discuss differences in doctrine as well as to form a military alliance between the pope and the emperor against the Normans. The legates were well received by the emperor and lodged in the imperial palace of Pigi.<sup>18</sup> During this time they carried on a pamphlet

<sup>14</sup> Translated by J. A. Wilson, “The Psalms in the Post-Apostolic Church,” in *The Psalms in Worship*, ed. J. McNaugher (Pittsburgh, 1907), 165.

<sup>15</sup> S. Wander, “The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 8 (1973), 89–104; S. Spain, “Heraclius, Byzantine Imperial Ideology and the David Plates,” *Speculum* 52 (1977), 217–37; J. Trilling, “Myth & Metaphor at the Byzantine Court. A Literary Approach to the David Plates,” *Byzantion* 48 (1978), 249–63.

<sup>16</sup> H. Maguire, “The Art of Comparing in Byzantium,” *ArtB* 70 (1988), 88–103; I. Kalavrezou, “A New Type of Icon: Ivories and Steatites,” *Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and His Age*, Second International Byzantine Conference Delphi, 1987 (Athens, 1989), 377–96; I. Kalavrezou, forthcoming study on the Paris Psalter.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the Book of Ceremonies records the acclamations of the demes in the hippodrome at the races which took place at the end of Carnival and the onset of spring. When the emperor appears the crowd chants: “Your city flourishes again, O emperor, and prays as it ought to. Seeing your clemency ( $\pi\kappa\alpha\delta\tau\eta\varsigma$ ), she calls you another David.” A. Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, II (Paris, 1939), chap. 82 (73), p. 167.

<sup>18</sup> D. Nicol, “Byzantium and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century,” *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World* (London, 1972), pt. II, 9.

warfare with, most notably, Niketas Stethatos, a monk of the Studios monastery who wrote concerning the use of the azymes and also on the filioque.<sup>19</sup> On 24 June the emperor allowed a disputation to take place at the Studios monastery in which Stethatos was forced by the emperor to recant and burn one of his treatises.<sup>20</sup> No doubt, the disputation must have been degrading and infuriating for the monastery.

Kerouarios shunned the legates from the first moment of their arrival and resented their intimate relationship with the emperor.<sup>21</sup> On 16 July the papal legates deposited a bull of excommunication for the patriarch and his followers on the altar of Hagia Sophia.<sup>22</sup> Two days later they left the city. The enraged Kerouarios incited a mob to force Constantine to bring the legates back to attend a standing synod to discuss the bull. However, the legates refused to return and Constantine had to bow to the patriarch by allowing him to punish the translators of the bull and the relatives of a certain Argyros.<sup>23</sup>

Argyros, military governor of southern Italy, was also implicated in these events by the synod. Between 1045 and 1051, he was at the court of Constantine and remained a close adviser of the emperor, as well as a patron of the Latin churches in Constantinople. This was much to the patriarch's dismay since he viewed Argyros as a heretic and his influence over the emperor as evil.<sup>24</sup> Kerouarios claimed that the legates were impostors sent by Argyros, pointing out that en route to Constantinople, the legates had met with Argyros and conferred at length.<sup>25</sup> Kerouarios further asserted that the seals on the papal documents had been tampered with and alleged that Humbert had forged the letters with the help of Argyros.<sup>26</sup> Thus, through much of the emperor's reign, Kerouarios viewed Constantine as consorting with heretics, first in the form of Argyros and his party, and later, the papal legates.

Kerouarios also played an instrumental role in the overthrow of Constantine's successor, Michael VI, and the selection and ascension to the throne of Isaac Komnenos. It did not take long, once again, for emperor and patriarch to come into bitter conflict, resulting in a charge of heresy against Kerouarios. While outside the city walls the patriarch was seized by order of Isaac on 8 November 1058 and taken into exile. The emperor summoned a synod far from Constantinople in the provincial town of Madytus in order to depose him, but Kerouarios died en route under mysterious circumstances. The populace hailed the patriarch as a martyr, and Isaac found himself in a difficult

<sup>19</sup> H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 535–38.

<sup>20</sup> *History of the Church*, ed. H. Jedin and J. Dolan (New York, 1987), 415.

<sup>21</sup> The emperor's cordial relationship with the Latin legates was, of course, motivated in large part by his desire to form a military alliance with the papacy in order to oust the Normans from southern Italy.

<sup>22</sup> The bull is published in PL 143, cols. 1002–1004; the Greek translation, PG 120, cols. 741–746. For a partial English translation see D. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization seen through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago 1984), 208–9.

<sup>23</sup> S. Runciman, *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford, 1955), 49.

<sup>24</sup> The rivalry between Kerouarios and Argyros is discussed by M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire* (London–New York, 1984), 28; M. Smith, *And Taking Bread . . .* (Paris, 1978), 123; and A. Michel, "Die Echtheit der Panoplia des Michael Kerullarios," *OC* 36 (1941), 174 and 176–78.

<sup>25</sup> R. Mayne, "East and West in 1054," *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 11 (1954), 140; *History of the Church*, 415.

<sup>26</sup> J. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), 134; see the synod's text, PG 120, cols. 736–748; partial English translation in Geanakoplos, *Byzantium*, 209–12.

position. Some months later he fell sick and, in December 1059, took on the monastic habit to live out the rest of his days in the monastery of Studios.

#### THE SIN OF DAVID

David, the ideal biblical king, was usually represented in Byzantine art as the example of a supreme ruler whose life had been marked by political success as well as absolute piety and obedience to God. As the archetypal Old Testament king and prophet, he is part of church programs in mosaics and wall paintings.<sup>27</sup> But most often, representations of David and the events of his life appear in psalters. Frequently these illustrations show him as the young shepherd playing his harp, or as the prophet-king and author of the psalms. Another common theme is David's heroic capacity, fighting Goliath, the bear, or the lion. When the theme of David's sinful conduct toward Bathsheba and her husband Uriah is shown, emphasis is placed on Nathan's rebuke and David's pious repentance.

In illustrated psalters, the sin of David usually appears beside the text of psalm 50 (51). The subject of this psalm is a prayer to God for remission of sins: the penitent psalmist, overwhelmed by shame for his transgressions, accepts his guilt. The title of the psalm ascribes this personal prayer to David and associates it with the moment of the king's repentance following Nathan's admonishment: "For the end, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, when he had gone in to Bersabee."<sup>28</sup> Verses from this psalm were appropriately read several times during the days of fasting and penitence for Lent.<sup>29</sup>

Most Byzantine psalters depict only two events in connection with the sin of David: the admonition of Nathan and the repentance of David. These two scenes are shown consecutively and are often combined into one compositional unit, as in the Paris Psalter.<sup>30</sup> Usually, David is shown seated on his throne, while the prophet Nathan stands in front of him with his hand raised in a gesture of reproach. Behind or above David, an angel hovers wielding a spear with which he urges the king to face the prophet and remind him of divine retribution. In the second episode, David is depicted prostrating himself before Nathan, or kneeling under the Hand of God.<sup>31</sup> In a few psalters with

<sup>27</sup> For example, in the drum of the dome of the Theotokos church in Daphni.

<sup>28</sup> Quotes from the Old Testament are according to *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha*, Greek with English translation, Samuel Bagster (London, n.d.). New Testament quotes are from the King James version.

<sup>29</sup> J. Mateos, "Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise," *OCA*, nos. 165–166 (Rome, 1962–63), 36ff.

<sup>30</sup> Paris, Bibl. Nat. cod. gr. 139, fol. 136v: H. Buchthal, *The Miniatures of the Paris Psalter* (London, 1938), fig. 8. Other examples: Dumbarton Oaks, cod. no. 3, fol. 27r, dated 1084; S. Der Nersessian, "A Psalter and New Testament Manuscript at Dumbarton Oaks," *DOP* 19 (1965), fig. 6; Vat. gr. 1927, fol. 90v, first half of the 12th century: E. T. De Wald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint*, III, Part 1: *Vaticanicus graecus* 1927 (Princeton, 1941), pl. xxii.

<sup>31</sup> In some psalters, the figure of Bathsheba, the third person mentioned in the psalm, is added. She either watches the event from her palace window, or stands behind David in the place usually occupied by the angel. For images of Bathsheba watching from her window, see Vatican Lib. cod. Barberini, gr. 372, fol. 82v, ca. 1092; J. Anderson, "The Date and Purpose of the Barberini Psalter," *CahArch* 31 (1983), 35–67; Buchthal, *Paris Psalter*, 28; New York Public Library, Spencer coll. gr. cod. I, fol. 126v, 13th century: A. Cutler, "The Spencer Psalter: A Thirteenth Century Byzantine Manuscript in the New York Public Library," *CahArch* 23 (1974), 135, fig. 5. For images of Bathsheba standing behind David, see the Chludov

marginal illustrations, there is an additional representation of the death of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite. The composition of this scene is basically identical in all existing examples.<sup>32</sup> Uriah lies at the gate of the city of Rabbah between the two fighting armies, his back pierced with arrows.

In contrast to the common tradition of focusing on Nathan's rebuke and David's subsequent repentance, the illustrations of Vat. gr. 752 emphasize David's sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, in addition to including the standard pious repentance scene. In all, there are five miniatures comprising seven episodes, spread out over three consecutive folios: Bathsheba bathing, David sending Uriah to war, the battle, Uriah's death, Nathan's admonition, David's repentance, and David and the child of his adultery with Bathsheba. A cycle this extensive is unique among Byzantine psalters, and one is struck by the apparent desire to illustrate explicitly this sinful episode in David's life.

The first scene shows Bathsheba immersed in a golden tub, flanked by attendants, one of whom pours water over her head (Fig. 2). No other Byzantine psalter contains such a scene. The only other comparable example is found in the *Sacra Parallelia* in which Bathsheba is shown preparing to bathe.<sup>33</sup> The commentaries of Theodoret and Hesychios cited for psalm 50 (51) emphasize that one must undergo baptism for the remission of one's sins, as is inferred from verse 2: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Hesychios interprets: "The water of thy baptism is so great that it will be able to reach all the way to my soul. . ."<sup>34</sup> Theodoret, in his preface to the psalm which begins directly beneath the miniature of the bath, adds "blessed are those whose sins and evil doings can be purified by just taking once the grace of baptism."<sup>35</sup> Thus, it appears that here commentary and illustration are connected in a rather ironic way. The tub in which Bathsheba is immersed resembles a baptismal font. But, although David is not shown watching her, as the narrative requires, the element of sin cannot be eliminated from this scene. A conscious choice was made to depict the bath, the event precipitating David's sin of adultery.

The next episode illustrates David sending Uriah to war (Fig. 3). This miniature appears in the upper part of the next folio opposite the bath scene. David is shown seated on a throne addressing Uriah and three companions. The inscription in the miniature specifies David's sinful act: "David is sending Uriah to war."<sup>36</sup> Theodoret's

Psalter, Moscow Historical Museum, cod. gr. 129, fol. 50r, second half of the 9th century: M. V. Shchepkina, *Minniatyuri Khludovskoi Psaltyri* (Moscow, 1977), fol. 50r.

<sup>32</sup> For example, the Chludov Psalter, fol. 50r, ibid.; the Theodore Psalter, London Brit. Mus. add. 19.352, fol. 63v, dated 1066: Der Nersessian, *L'illustrations des psautiers grecs*, fig. 102. In the only extant illustrated version of the Book of Kings (Vat. gr. 333), one further scene is included in which a messenger brings the news of Uriah's death to David. This addition is not surprising since this part of the narrative extends over two whole chapters. J. Lassus, *L'illustration Byzantine du livre des Rois*, Vaticanus graecus 333 (Paris, 1973), pl. xxvii, figs. 91, 92.

<sup>33</sup> The nude Bathsheba sits before a basin into which she places her hand. She is attended by another nude woman who pours water into the basin from a vase. In accordance with the text of Kings, David is seen watching Bathsheba from the roof of his palace. K. Weitzmann, *The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallelia*, Parisianus Graecus 923 (Princeton, 1979), pl. xxxv, fig. 131.

<sup>34</sup> PG 27, col. 849.

<sup>35</sup> PG 80, col. 1240.

<sup>36</sup> "ἀποστέλλων δὲ αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰς πόλεμον," fol. 163r.

original preface text into which this miniature has been inserted discusses the “Great David” (*μέγας Δαβίδ*) endowed with divine grace on account of his “prophetic repentance.”<sup>37</sup> This sentence, however, has been deliberately eliminated in this manuscript so that rather than praising David, emphasis is placed on his sinful conduct by way of the illustration. Significantly, the illustration occupies the space which would have been taken up by the sentence of praise.<sup>38</sup>

The second illustration on this folio deals with Uriah’s death (Fig. 4). The depiction of this subject differs from all other known examples found in psalters, and in the illustrated Vatican Book of Kings. The miniature in the lower half of fol. 163r is divided into two registers: the upper one depicts two groups of mounted soldiers bearing long lances and engaged in combat; the lower register shows a soldier piercing Uriah with a sword. An attendant standing beside a horse points to the brutal killing. As already mentioned, the few other manuscripts which contain this episode depict a single scene of Uriah lying dead. The brutality of the act is magnified by showing the actual moment of the killing. The inscription underscores this: “Uriah is being slaughtered in the war.”<sup>39</sup>

Only the miniature of the admonition and repentance follows traditional iconography (Fig. 5). Nathan stands with his arm raised in rebuke. David appears twice: once enthroned and, a second time, prostrating himself at the feet of Nathan. Above the enthroned David hovers the half-figure of an angel holding a long spear. The inscription included in the miniature reads, “The prophet Nathan explains to David the parable concerning Bathsheba, considering the sin the Lord pardons him.”<sup>40</sup> The basic composition of this miniature appears in numerous manuscripts.<sup>41</sup> Common to all is the figure of the threatening angel armed with a spear, which expresses the idea of divine retribution.

The last miniature in this series, rather than appearing in the catena column, has been placed in the margin between the text of the psalm and that of the commentary (Fig. 6). It is small and looks as if it were an afterthought in the decorative scheme. The inscription to this illustration is to be found in the top margin of the folio, since there was insufficient room to include it within the frame of the miniature itself. It reads: “... and my sin is ever before me,”<sup>42</sup> taken from verse three of psalm 50 (51). Close obser-

<sup>37</sup> PG 80, col. 1240. “Αλλὰ μηδεὶς ἀμφιβαλλέτω, εἰ κατὰ τὸν τῆς μετανοίας καιρὸν προφητικῆς ἡξώτῳ χάριτος ὁ μέγας Δαβίδ.”

<sup>38</sup> Compare the preface of Theodoret in the catena column, fol. 163r, to the full version of his text in PG 80, col. 1240.

<sup>39</sup> “σφάζων τὸν οὐρίαν εἰς πόλεμον”: fol. 163r.

<sup>40</sup> “ὁ πρ(ο)φ(ή)της ναθάν λέγων τ(ὸν) δα(νί)δ παραβολικό(ν) περὶ τῆς βερσαβεὲς νοήσας τὸ ἀμάρτημα συνεχῶ(ς) αὐτὸν ὁ Θ(εό)ς”: fol. 163v. The sentence as it stands is strange, especially the accusative “αὐτὸν.” Here the mistake seems to be with the scribe in the word “συνεχῶς” which makes little sense here but in an abbreviated form (συνεχῶ) can look very similar to (συγχῶ). This verb would make more sense in the sentence and would explain also the accusative for αὐτὸν. The sentence would read: νοήσας τὸ ἀμάρτημα συγχω(ρῶν) αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός, which can be found in a similar form in psalm 2: *ν(αὶ) συγχ(ωρῶν) ὁ χ(ριστὸς) τὸν δα(νί)δ*. David’s repentance and his forgiveness by God is also the main subject of the story and the reason why, when illustrated, it accompanies psalm 50 (51).

<sup>41</sup> Dumbarton Oaks cod. 3, fol. 27r: Der Nersessian, “Psalter at Dumbarton Oaks,” fig. 6; Vatican gr. 1927, fol. 90v: De Wald, *Vat. gr. 1927*, pl. xxii; Athens, Benaki Mus. Vitr. 34, cod. no. 3, fol. 57v, second half of the 12th century: A Cutler and A. Weyl Carr, “The Psalter Benaki 34.3: An Unpublished Illuminated Manuscript from the Family 2400,” *REB* 34 (1976), 281–324, pl. 3, fig. 5.

<sup>42</sup> “*κ(αὶ) ἡ ἀμαρτία μ(ο)ν ἐνώπιόν μου ἐστὶν διὰ παντός*”: fol. 164r.

vation indicates that this illustration has gone through some revisions. Much of the paint has flaked off and the underdrawing reveals that in a first version a smaller figure of David stood frontally with his left arm raised and his right pointing toward a child who stood or sat enthroned before him in the folds of his garment. In the final version David is turned in three-quarter view, his right arm raised with a finger pointing to the inscription above. The child stands again before him but has been shifted to the left of the first. Possibly David's left arm was directed toward this child, but is no longer visible. These revisions reveal the improvisational nature of this image, which has no known precedents. Using verse 3 as yet another opportunity to refer to David's sin, the artist invented this unusual image.<sup>43</sup>

In analyzing this series of images as a whole, one should keep in mind that although the texts of neither the psalm nor the commentaries refer to any specific event from the life of David, the artist chose to create this elaborate sin cycle. What is notable about this series of images lies not only in its unparalleled extensiveness and creation of new scenes, but also in the clever arrangement of the miniatures within the text so as to preserve the historical sequence of events. The five miniatures are incorporated in the catena in the following way: Bathsheba's bath appears at the beginning of the catena to psalm 50 (51) on fol. 162v, followed immediately by Theodoret's introductory remarks; Theodoret's preface continues through the recto side of the opposite folio (163r), interrupted only once with the miniature of David sending Uriah to war; the following miniature of Uriah's death appears at the end of Theodoret's preface; the repentance miniature is placed at the top of folio 163v, just above Hesychios' commentary to the title of the psalm; and the last miniature is placed on the following folio (164r) in the margin between the third verse of the psalm and Hesychios' commentary to verses 4ff. In other words, the artist succeeded in squeezing the first four miniatures into the space corresponding to the preface and commentary on the title, the only texts which mention David. The fifth miniature is the only one which accompanies the psalm proper and its commentary. The miniatures stress David's sinfulness by elaborating on the motivation, execution, and results of his sinful acts, rather than being limited to the standard schema of repentance and pardon. The final illustration of David and his son by Bathsheba diminishes the importance of David's pardon and asserts, along with the inscription, that he would never be free from the memory of his crimes.

Adultery was very much an issue at the court of Constantine IX. The most infamous instance involved his longtime mistress Skleraina. Even before Constantine became emperor, Skleraina had accompanied him in exile on the island of Mytilene. Once he became emperor, Psellos tells us, Constantine tried to keep his affair secret, though he was eventually forced to admit publicly to his liaison.<sup>44</sup> He succeeded in persuading Zoe to accept Skleraina into the palace and he secured the position of his mistress with a "treaty of friendship" and the title of Σεβαστή. The senate was called on to witness the signing of this contract by Zoe, Constantine, and Skleraina. Psellos writes: "Despite their embarrassment, the senators still praised the agreement as if it were a document sent down

<sup>43</sup>The commentary of Hesychius accompanying this section of the psalm restates verse three in slightly different words: Ὁρῶ τὰς προφητίες μου τὰς πονηρὰς ἔστωσας ἐμπροσθέν σου. PG 27, col. 849.

<sup>44</sup>Michel Psellos, *Chronographie*, ed. E. Renauld (Paris, 1926), Bk. 6, 58; English translation, E. R. A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers. The Chronographia of Michael Psellus* (Baltimore, 1966), 183.

from heaven. They called it a ‘loving-cup’ and lavished on it all the other flattering epithets that deceive and cajole frivolous and empty-headed persons.”<sup>45</sup> It seems that this arrangement was not only embarrassing to the senators, but aroused resentment among the general populace, resulting in a riot during the emperor’s procession to the church of the Holy Martyrs on 9 March 1044, from which he barely escaped.<sup>46</sup>

Since his marriage to Zoe was considered uncanonical, Constantine was already on shaky ground. In his description of the way in which this marriage was carried out, Psellos says, “Since the common laws respecting marriage could hardly be flouted, the patriarch Alexius settled the question of the wedding. . . . Certainly he did not himself lay his hands upon them in blessing at the coronation, but he did embrace them after the marriage ceremony and the act of crowning had been performed.”<sup>47</sup> Evidently, the marriage caused a certain amount of discomfort and awkwardness for the patriarch. One can only imagine that the situation was sorely exacerbated by Constantine’s subsequent introduction of Skleraina into the palace not long after his marriage. The magnitude of these events in the moral conscience of the Byzantines is exemplified by Niketas Stethatos’ repeated warnings to Constantine to break off relations with Skleraina, even before the riot of 1044.<sup>48</sup>

If we return to Vat. gr. 752, it does not seem unreasonable to hypothesize that the unusual emphasis on David’s sin of adultery and need for pardon, explicitly rendered in the illustrations of psalm 50 (51), might be accounted for as a critical comment on the scandalous conduct of the emperor and his institutionalized form of concubinage. But this was not the emperor’s only sin and, as we will see, the image of David as a sinner is not limited to psalm 50.

#### DAVID JUDGED BY CHRIST

The theme of judgment for one’s sins actually permeates the illustrations of the entire manuscript. This theme is first alluded to in the frontispiece to the psalms and is further developed in a number of miniatures. The frontispiece shows David standing on a raised platform covered with a ciboriumlike structure (Fig. 7). The inscription to the left and right of his head reads: “The prophet David chanting to the kinnor with the prophets.”<sup>49</sup> He is surrounded by his musicians, three of whom are named by inscription as Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. Above David is Christ enthroned, flanked by two narrative scenes placed here outside the Feast cycle and thus not part of it. On the left is the scene of the Marys at the tomb, and on the right is the Raising of Lazarus, both labeled by inscription.<sup>50</sup> In the scene on the left, the angel points toward the barely visible tomb, and thus it appears that he points to the figure of the resurrected Christ

<sup>45</sup> *Chronographie*, ed. Renauld, Bk. 6, 58; Engl. trans., Sewter, *Fourteen Rulers*, 184.

<sup>46</sup> *Michaelis Attaliotae Historia*, Bonn ed. (1853), 47; Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitomae Historiarum libri XVIII* 17, 21, Bonn ed. (1897), 619–21; ed. I. Thurn, *Ioannes Scylitzes Synopsis Historiarum* (Berlin, 1973), 434.

<sup>47</sup> *Chronographie*, ed. Renauld, Bk. 6, 20; Sewter, *Fourteen Rulers*, 165.

<sup>48</sup> Michel, “Die Echtheit,” 196; idem, *Humbert und Kerullarios. Quellen und Studien zum Schisma des XI. Jahrhunderts*, II (Paderborn, 1930), 171–72, with references.

<sup>49</sup> “ὅ προφήτης δα(νι)δ μελωδῶν τὴ[ν] κινύρων μετὰ κ(αὶ) τῶν προφητῶν.” Reference to the musicians as prophets is not unprecedented. It is found in the Books of the Chronicles and in the writings of the commentators, De Wald, *Vat. gr. 752*, 48.

<sup>50</sup> “[ό] τάφ[ος]” and “[ή] ἔγεο?]σις τοῦ λαξά[ρου].”

in the center. The two scenes, the Marys at the tomb and the Raising of Lazarus, do not follow a chronological sequence but rather together allude respectively to the resurrection of Christ and to the promise of this resurrection for the faithful on Earth, who will be judged by Christ seated on the throne of judgment as he appears in the center.

Following the frontispiece is the decorative headpiece to psalm 1 (Fig. 8). It is in the shape of a Π and encloses the title of the psalter and the title of the first psalm. Within the golden borders of the headpiece are thirteen medallions; five contain figures and eight are filled with birds. The five medallions inside the top band make up a Deesis. As is standard, the head of Christ is in the center flanked by the Virgin on the left and St. John the Baptist on the right. Not so typically, the outer two medallions contain St. Michael on the left and David on the right. It is not unusual to find archangels flanking the core figures of the Deesis, however David does not appear in any known composition as part of the Deesis itself. In general, the prophets are not appropriate participants in the prayer of intercession, even in an extended Deesis. David's presence cannot be intercessory.<sup>51</sup> What, then, is his role in this headpiece? Is it possible that he is represented praying for his own salvation? There is evidence to support this supposition.

Psalm 2 begins with an illustration of David prostrating himself before Christ enthroned and accompanied by the archangel Michael (fol. 20r; Fig. 9). The inscription states: "And Christ is pardoning David."<sup>52</sup> David is smaller than the other two figures and is prostrating himself with his legs drawn up beneath him, his hands stretched out toward Christ's feet, and his head raised, entreating Christ. Although small and in a humiliating position, David is the focus of the composition. Michael has brought him to Christ to be pardoned. Thus, this miniature can be seen as a continuation of the theme of judgment which begins in the upper section of the frontispiece. This is supported by De Wald's speculation that the mutilated folio preceding folio 20r contained two miniatures, one on the recto side where its red border still remains and another on the verso, which, on the basis of the commentaries to psalm 1, De Wald believed may have depicted the Second Coming or Last Judgment.<sup>53</sup>

Whether or not judgment was the subject of the missing miniatures, the illustration to psalm 2 has its source in the commentary of Hesychius on verse 2, written below the miniature. Hesychius speaks of the evil rulers, such as Herod and Pilate, who in the Day of Judgment will be set at naught.<sup>54</sup> Other Byzantine psalters when illustrating this psalm depict the council of Herod, Pilate, and other rulers against Christ in connection with verse 2.<sup>55</sup> However, in Vat. gr. 752, the illustrator chose instead to isolate the theme

<sup>51</sup>The ambiguity that this miniature presents is solved in the psalter at Harvard, a manuscript of the later 11th or early 12th century. There David is shown standing and pointing to the Deesis group. The Deesis figures have been given a separate space and are set within an elaborate architectural frame. David stands outside it. L. Nees, "An Illuminated Byzantine Psalter at Harvard University," *DOP* 29 (1975), 207–24.

<sup>52</sup>"κ(αὶ) συγχ(ωρῶν) ὁ χ(ριστὸς) τ(ὸν) δα(υΐδ)."'

<sup>53</sup>De Wald, *Vat. gr. 752*, 8 note 1. De Wald explains that the last verse of psalm 1 which refers to judgment was interpreted by Theodoret, Athanasius, Eusebius, and pseudo-Athanasius as the Last Judgment.

<sup>54</sup>"ἔξουδενώσει γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως": PG 27, col. 653.

<sup>55</sup>For example, the Bristol Psalter, fol. 9r: S. Dufrenne, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge*, I: *Pantocrator 61, Paris grec 20, British Museum 40731* (Paris, 1966), pl. 47; the Theodore Psalter, fol. 2r: Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs*, fig. 3. In both these miniatures, Herod and Pilate are named by inscriptions as members of the council of mortal kings against Christ.



1 Vaticanus graecus 752, fol. 12r. Athanasios writing and presenting the letter to King Marcellinus (photos: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)



2 Fol. 162v. Psalm 50, The Bath of Bathsheba

3



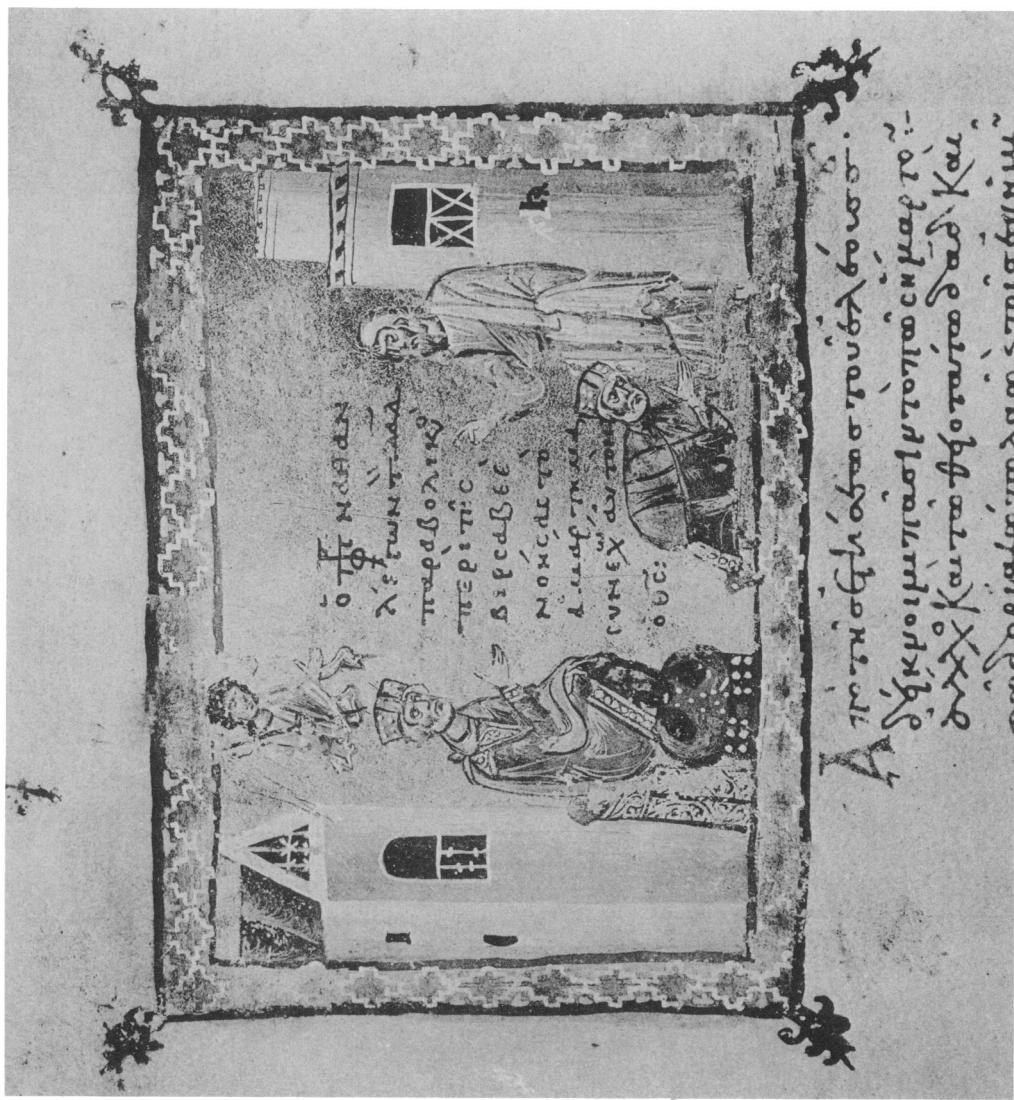
Τυχογενή τάκτα λιμδίσματε  
 ζομογύνσε ποιησατο καθέδν  
 ματσγεόρτα λιμπάτη μελλόποι  
 Γορδιόκριστος γεόρτα θανάτομημηρο  
 μέσοισι εργάδητερομογύνσεσσοισισβη  
 τελματιαρίζει. τελίχπομψλαθρόετερη  
 τηκτά ταχιόπρμημηδερράθπεθρυκη  
 τελπισμηχρισμοισιτηπροκημεταλη  
 διαρρηδημεδίδαξισκαρέρητετηπρο  
 χαριτοπηραχρόδητοι. ματταφελαπτει  
 ονγκητησαντπαραχθητημηρτηπρο

4



3 Fol. 163r. Psalm 50, David sending Uriah to war

4 Fol. 163r. Psalm 50, Uriah's death





7 Fol. 18v. Frontispiece



8 Fol. 19r. Psalm 1, Decorative headpiece with Deesis



9 Fol. 20r. Psalm 2, Christ forgives David



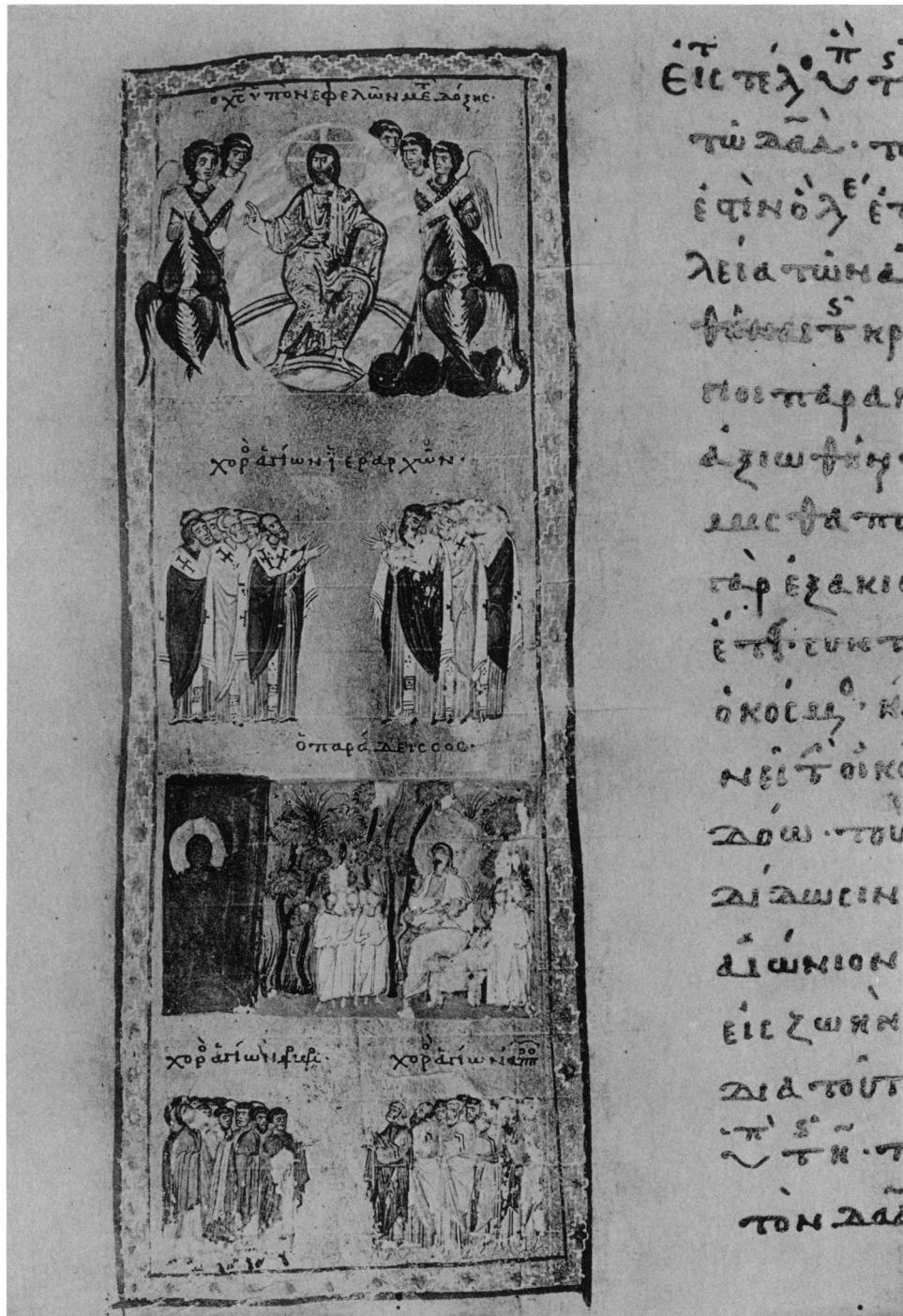
10 Fol. 44r. Psalm 12, Christ blesses and forgives David



11 Fol. 45r. Psalm 12, Christ forgives David



12 Folio 44v. Psalm 12, The resurrection of the dead



13 Fol. 42v. Psalm 11, Christ in glory and paradise with the choirs of the blessed

τὰ καὶ φαλλού εἰρί  
 καστελλώντος  
 ἐπειχῆ δαστρεψη  
 κεύεται καὶ χειρὶ .  
 ὑπερέστιν οὐθὲ λόγος .  
 καθά επὶ τοῦ προφήτη  
 ἴεζεκίηλη μεταθή  
 κατέβη .  
 Ριμόμυθκε ὅπλ  
 ἔνθησικακίαν  
 θωράκια .  
**Κ**αὶ βαῖτωκῶν  
 τι Ζωρ. ούμλια  
 σθενήσω .  
**Δ**οκίμασον μέχε  
 καὶ τῷ ρασού μέ .  
**Π**ύρωσον ποιώ μέ  
 φρούριον καὶ τὴν  
 καρδίαν μου .



Οὐκούσιμος λέγεται  
 απλότητη φύσιμος οὐκέτι  
 καί τιλερούσιδερός τοιούτοις  
 οὐκ θερμάκωστος καὶ τοι κρίστο  
 ουτού τοῦ φυσικού τιλερούστοις

Εἴχω γαρ τοῦ θυρατοῦ αὐτού με  
 κλείσομεν ἀπίζω - αλλά  
 σέγιον οὐδεις διασπορά κριτική  
 τοσεύμενος δίκησαρπιστό<sup>ο</sup>  
 Ιερός -

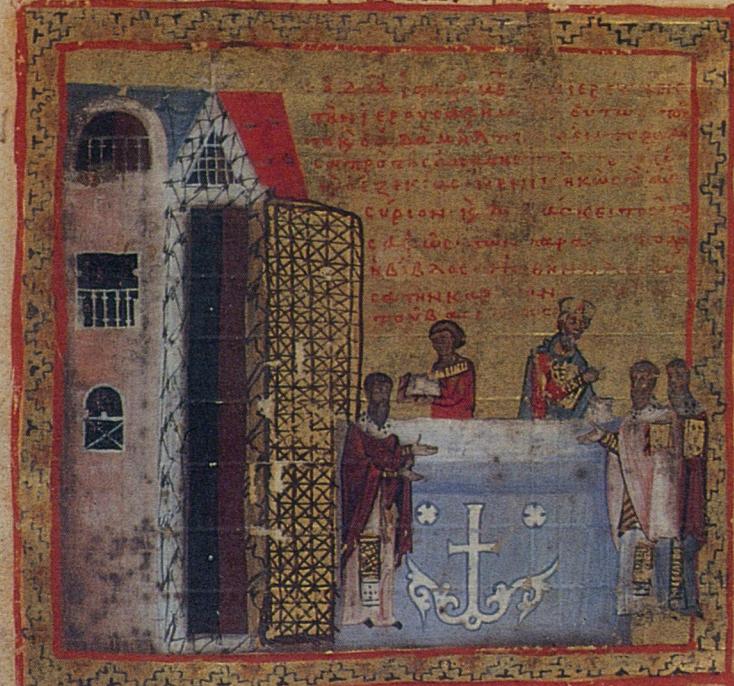
Οὐκαρδιογύμνατοσσείσθεων  
 τούτων διατελεσθεῖσι μετεριστέ<sup>ο</sup>  
 αλλά . καὶ ταῦτηρά δέ μοι στο<sup>σ</sup>  
 τησθήμαρτοσσετηρεύθροσ  
 οὐτεκαρδίστο  
 πιπότεστοσσούργυροσθέτω<sup>ο</sup>  
 ποτοποιεῖμι - αλλά . ωσάπορο  
 τητηγαρκαίακακίαστοστούζημο<sup>ο</sup>  
 καὶ τείρωσύ κακούργυροστο<sup>ο</sup>  
 μαρτιάστο

**ΔΤ** Ο ποτὲ εἰ μετέπισθαι τὸν ἀρχαῖον τόπον  
ποιῶσι ποιοῦντες δλλάχοντες τὸν τόπον  
πολεμίκαιον· σύνθετον τὸν τόπον

**ΘΕΟ** Οὐ ποτὲ θύγετο μόνον τὸν τόπον  
διδούσι τὸν τόπον μάντυον τὸν τόπον  
ψαλμόν των ἑκατόντα τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
μαντικούς καθέτης τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
ουργάριον· οὐδέποτε τὸν τόπον  
λένε· τὸν τόπον μάντυον τὸν τόπον  
θαυματορεύοντας τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
τοις μαντικούς καθέτης τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
καὶ τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
μακάριον τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν.

Ἐπ.

**Κ**αὶ λογίσθω τὸν τόπον  
μερμαντούσην  
τὸν τόπον· καὶ  
ἔπειτα τὸν τόπον  
τοῦ εγκαίνιου  
τοῦ δικού δαλτού τοῦ το  
οὐκέτι τὸν τόπον  
τάντε πειδήστο  
τέλος τούτων οὐκέτι  
νοποίησεν πάντας  
τοῦ σπιρουσόκεαν  
τὰς εκκλησίας οὐκος  
ταράντους είσει  
καθώσει πενένοικι  
εισενάγοντοι καὶ  
περιπατήσω· καὶ  
τέτεινται είσαιναι  
τούς εἰσαγάγει αὐτούς  
τούς σωστέοτι  
ταῦτα μηδέν.



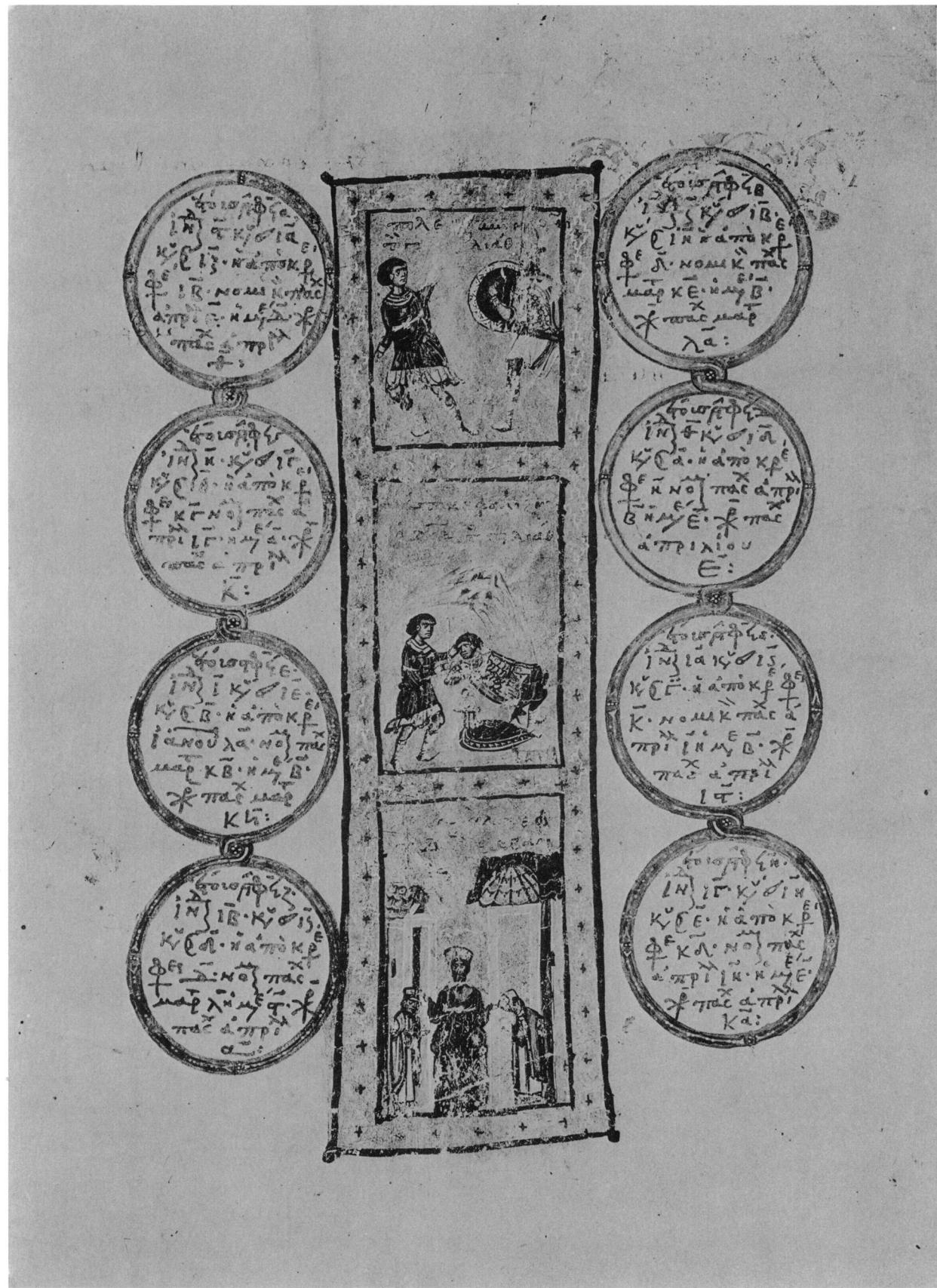
**Δ**ασάντοις τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
μαντίνεσσιν τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
τοις μαντίνεσσιν τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν  
τοις μαντίνεσσιν τὸν τόπον τοις μαντίνεσσιν



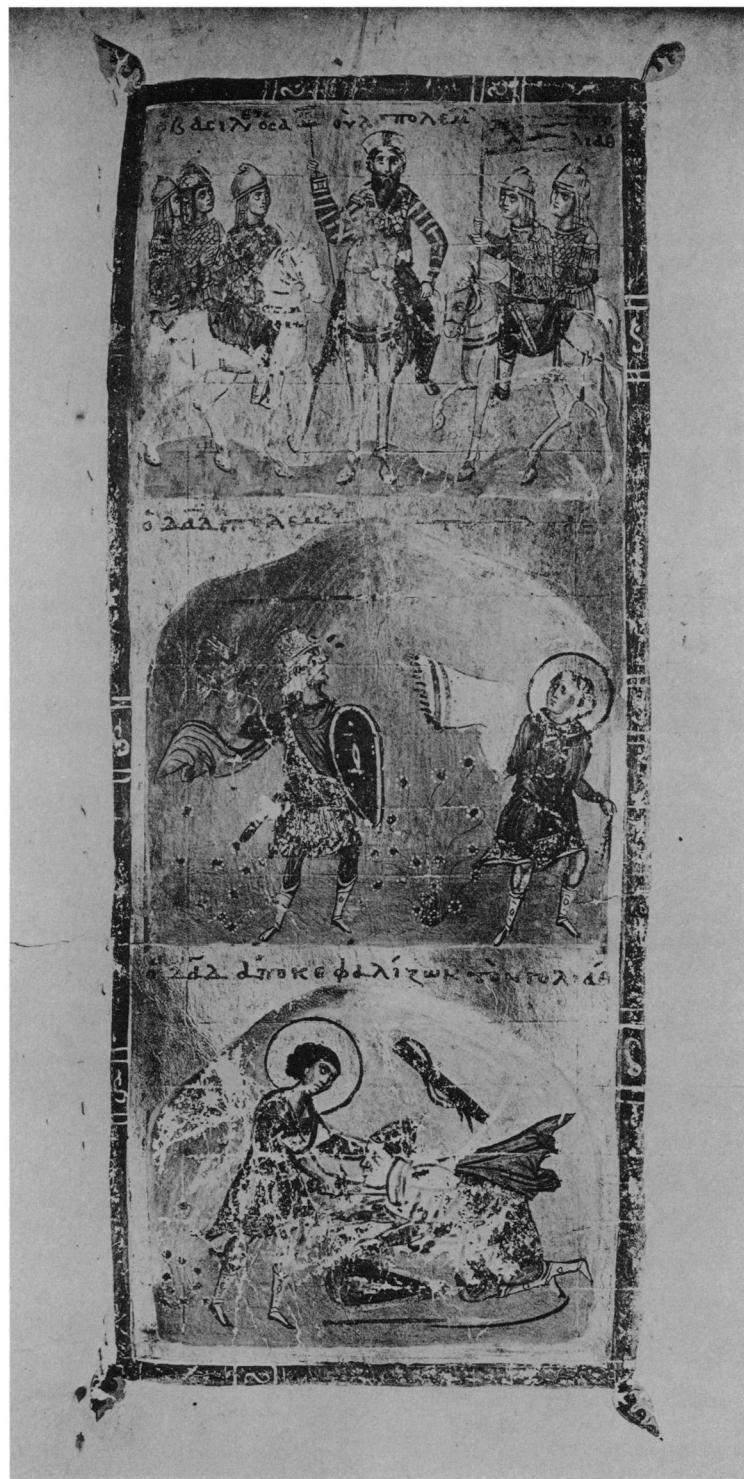
14 Fol. 104r. Psalm 34, David's victory over Goliath



15 Fol. 104v. Psalm 34, David prays to Christ



16 Fol. 2v. David's victory over Goliath and marriage to Michal



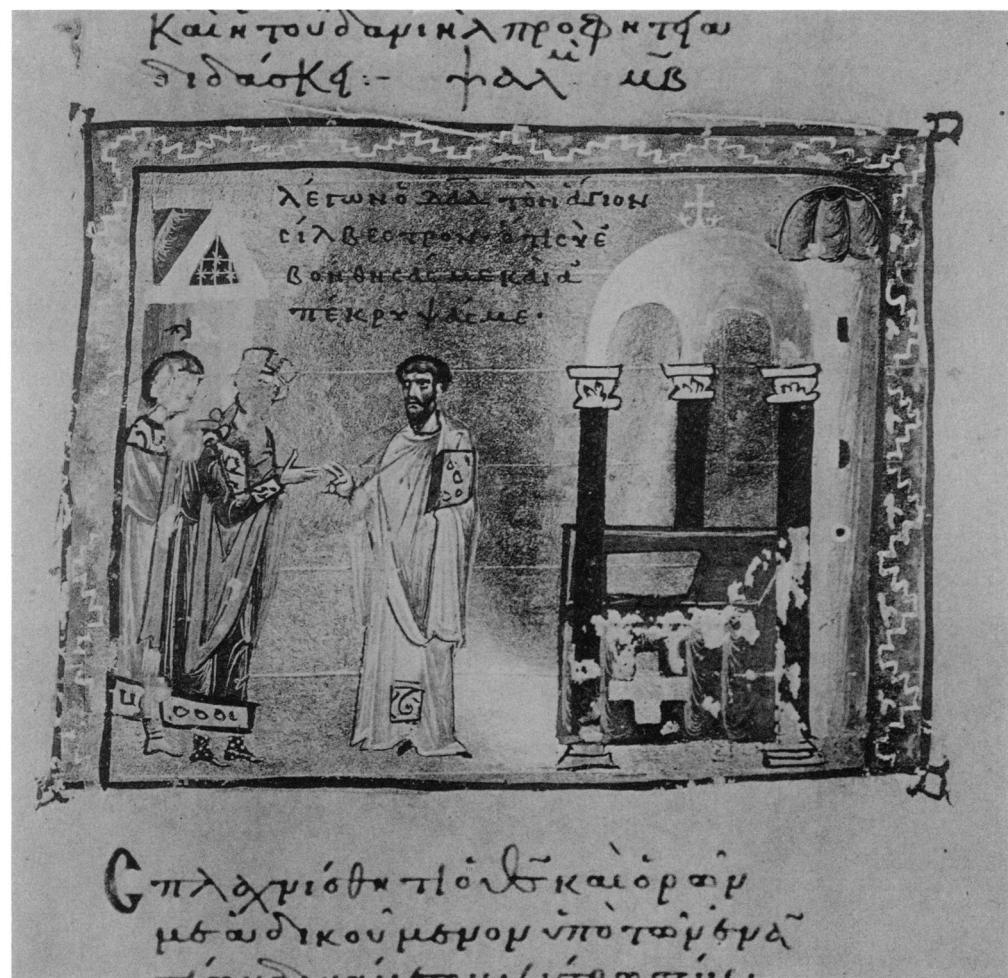
17 Fol. 448v. Psalm 151, David's victory over Goliath



18 Fol. 449r. Psalm 151, David's triumphant return to Jerusalem with Goliath's head and marriage to Michal



19 Fol. 197v. Psalm 64, David prostrates before Christ and addresses him as the Lamb of God



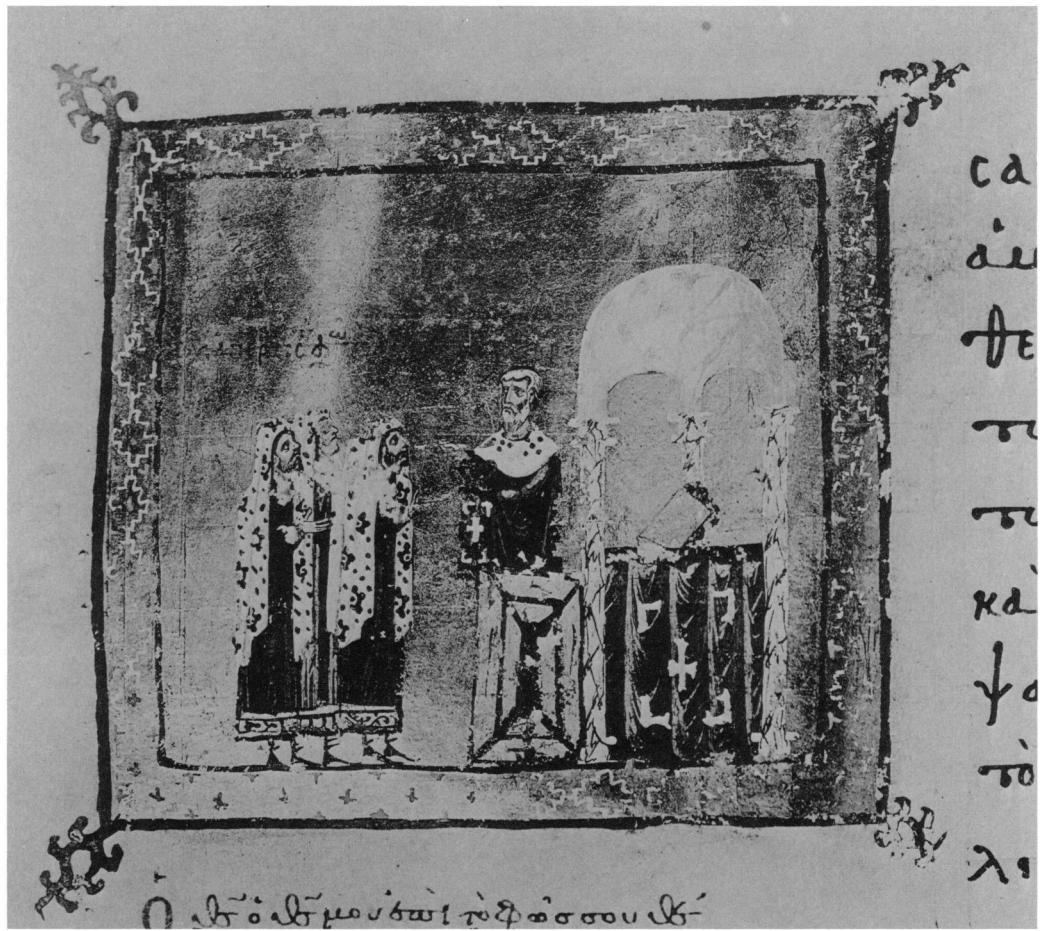
20 Fol. 142v. Psalm 42, David before St. Silvester



21 Fol. 148r. Psalm 44, St. Silvester speaks to David



22 Fol. 193r. Psalm 62, St. Silvester baptizing



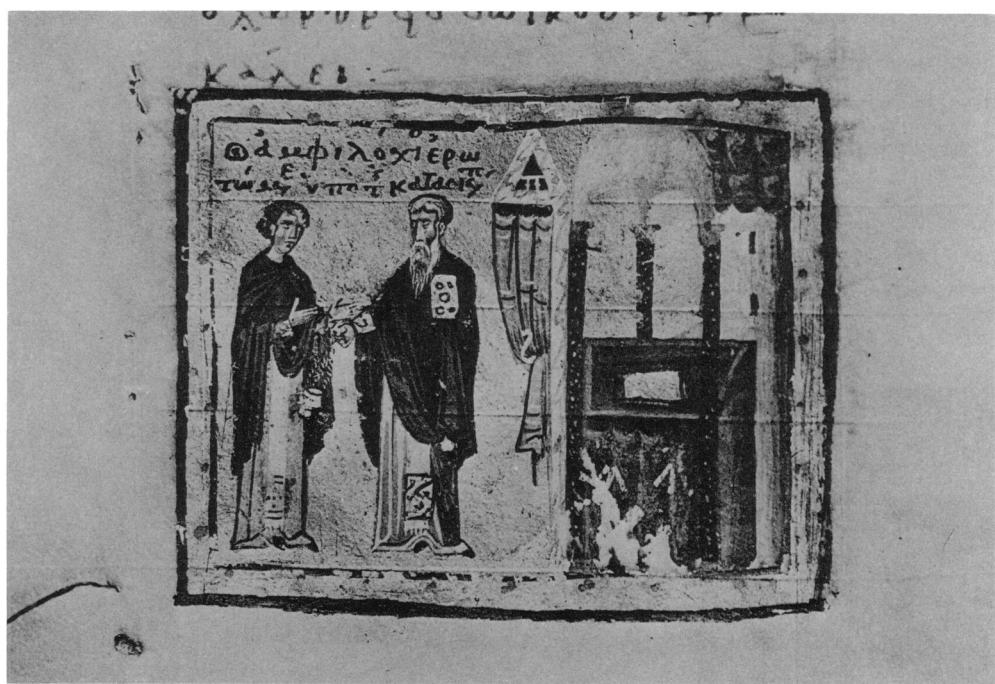
23 Fol. 193v. Psalm 62, St. Sylvester administering communion



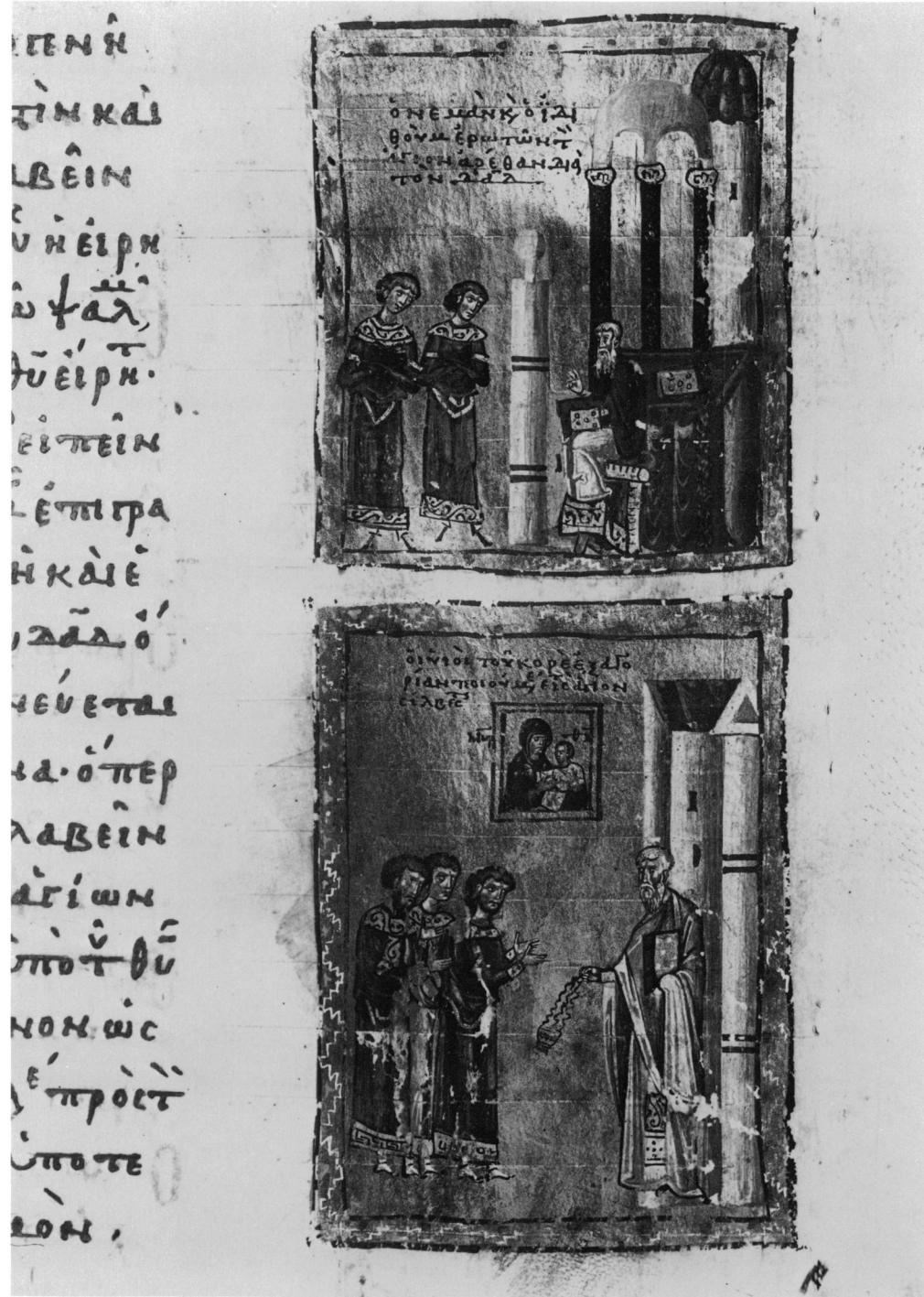
24 Fol. 29v. Psalm 7, Christ baptizing a man



25 Fol. 30r. Psalm 7, Christ leads a group of penitents into the church



26 Fol. 50v. Psalm 16, St. Amphiliocios is questioned by a spy



27 Fol. 51r. Psalm 16: (a) Heman and Jeduthun before St. Arethas; (b) the sons of Korah confess to St. Silvester

of judgment as the subject for the miniature, and selected David as the one to be shown judged before Christ. In this way, the exemplary king of the Old Testament becomes a parallel to, or even representative of, the evil rulers to be judged by Christ.

The relationship of David to Christ in the illustrations of Vat. gr. 752 is a key issue for understanding the illustrations as a whole. No fewer than twenty miniatures depict David and Christ together. These illustrations obviously do not illustrate any event in either the Old or New Testament. Moreover, they are not presenting the typological relationship common in other Byzantine psalters, as shown, for example, in a direct visual relationship between Christ in heaven and David standing below him, or through episodes setting the life of David in parallel to that of Christ. Unlike the marginal psalters in which more often than not David is shown praying alone or to an image of Christ which hovers above him, in the Vatican manuscript David and Christ occupy the same physical space. David is not praying to Christ in heaven but interacts with Christ as if they were both on Earth. In half of these scenes depicting David with Christ, the biblical king kneels in self-abasement before Christ either enthroned or standing, who, like Nathan, pardons him. Significantly, in almost all of these miniatures David is stripped of his customary halo. Hence, we see that the portrayal of David as a grievous sinner, pardoned through pious repentance and self-humiliation, is a dominant theme in Vat. gr. 752, even outside the context of the “penitential psalm” 50 (51). Neither the psalms nor the commentaries provide sufficient explanation for the meaning of these scenes. And, unlike the illustrations of psalm 50 (51), these miniatures do not disclose the nature of David’s sin.

But let us keep in mind the previous suggestion that the pardoning of David relates to a larger theme of transgression and judgment within the manuscript as a whole. In particular, two further miniatures showing David on his knees before Christ are placed in the manuscript so as to follow scenes connected to the Last Judgment. They are both illustrations to psalm 12 (13). The first (fol. 44r) faces the beginning of Hesychius’ preface to the psalm and shows the king kneeling at the feet of Christ who is majestically enthroned and blesses the king with his right hand while holding a book with his left (Fig. 10). In the other miniature (fol. 45r), located above the commentary of Hesychius to verse 1, David is more fully prostrate, with his elbows touching the ground, while Christ stands tall and erect before him, his arm raised again in blessing (Fig. 11). Behind Christ is a structure with a curtained doorway. The inscription on folio 44r reads: “Christ is blessing David; and the Lord has forgiven your sin.”<sup>56</sup> Similarly, the one on folio 45r reads: “Christ is forgiving David.”<sup>57</sup> In the first of the inscriptions David is clearly forgiven for a specific wrongdoing.

There is one additional illustration to psalm 12 (13). It occupies the entire catena column on fol. 44v, so that it is placed between the two miniatures of David being forgiven, and accompanies Hesychius’ preface to the psalm. Two scenes relating to resurrection are shown one above the other (Fig. 12). In the upper register, Adam and Eve stand on either side of a hill, raising their hands to Christ who appears at the top of the frame in the arc of heaven. Within the hill is the cave of death in which kneels a curious

<sup>56</sup>“ο χ(ριστὸς) εὐλογῶν τὸν δα(νί)δ καὶ ἀφεῖλεν α(ύριος) τὸ ἀμάρτημά σου.”

<sup>57</sup>“ο χ(ριστὸς) συγχωρῶν τ(ὸν) δα(νί)δ.”

figure clad in a rather extraordinary robe of white cloth with red and black patterns. Just below him lies the figure of Hades, so badly effaced that he is difficult to make out, but nonetheless identifiable by an inscription. Another inscription above this cave is illegible. In the lower half of the frame, two groups of men and women rise from their sarcophagi, in the process of being resurrected, as the inscription specifies “and the dead will rise up in Christ.”<sup>58</sup> They, too, wear the unusual garment of the figure in the cave.

According to Hesychius, the words “εἰς τὸ τέλος,” which appear in the title of this psalm, refer to the end of time when the Son of God will have supremacy over the world.<sup>59</sup> The word “τέλος” appears also in the first verse of the same psalm; David complains: “How long, Lord, wilt thou forget me, forever?” (ἔως πότε Κύριε ἐπιλήσῃ μου, εἰς τέλος). The artist represents the moment when the dead are resurrected and await judgment to accompany Hesychius’ preface to the psalm and its first verse. The appearance of Adam and Eve pleading with Christ for mercy is quite frequent in scenes of the Last Judgment in Byzantine art.<sup>60</sup> This psalm is unusual in having three illustrations. In addition, their arrangement in the catena columns of three pages is such that there is no intervening text between the miniatures.

A scene taken from Last Judgment iconography also illustrates the preceding psalm (fol. 42v). This illustration, like the one on folio 44v, takes up the entire catena column (Fig. 13). It is divided into four tiers, as is common in depictions of this subject elsewhere.<sup>61</sup> Christ appears at the top in a blue mandorla, flanked by angels and two tetramorphs. Beneath him stand two choirs of bishops facing each other, the one headed by John Chrysostom and the other by Basil. The gate of paradise and the patriarch Abraham holding the souls of the righteous in his bosom appear in the next tier. In the lowest tier, a group of martyrs stand on the left and the apostles led by Peter and Paul on the right. Worthy of note is the fact that the bishops occupy the tier closest to Christ, the place usually held by the prophets and apostles. The theme of judgment has as its source the preface of pseudo-Athanasius on the title of the psalm: “Εἰς τὸ τέλος, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁγδόνης· ψολμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ.” The commentator explains that in the sixth age the world will end, in the seventh age Christ will judge, and in the eighth age the souls of the people will be either punished or granted eternal life.<sup>62</sup> Although the text speaks of both groups, in this illustration only the right side of Christ is shown, namely the choirs of the elect.

In order to understand the miniatures of psalms 11 (12) and 12 (13), one must perceive the underlying structure of the method of illustration. First, the artist chooses

<sup>58</sup> “καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν χ(ριστ)ῷ ἀναστῆσονται.”

<sup>59</sup> PG 27, cols. 687–688. The expression εἰς τὸ τέλος is found in the title of many psalms. Only here, in psalm 12, and in psalm 6 is it connected with ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁγδόνης and interpreted together by Hesychios, PG 27, cols. 665–666.

<sup>60</sup> A. Cutler, *Transfigurations: Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography* (University Park, Pa., 1975), 100–110. On the iconography of the Last Judgment in Byzantine art, see B. Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends. Studien zur Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes*, WByzSt 3 (Vienna, 1966); D. Milošević, *The Last Judgment* (Recklinghausen, 1964).

<sup>61</sup> For example, the Paris Gospels, Bibl. Nat. cod. gr. 74, third quarter of the 11th century, fol. 51v; H. Omont, *Evangiles avec peintures Byzantines du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1908).

<sup>62</sup> PG 27, cols. 685–686.

the themes of judgment and resurrection, mentioned or alluded to in the texts of the commentators. Second, he chooses the manner in which he will depict these subjects, that is, showing only the elect in the scene of judgment. The choice of subject matter and the manner in which it is depicted are intended to govern the way in which the images of David prostrating are interpreted. The artist inserts these scenes of David, no longer with the text in mind, but in response to the exigencies of a special agenda, an agenda which dictates the program of illustration as a whole. Thus, while psalm 11 (12) is illustrated with a scene of the elect in paradise (in which the bishops have been given the most privileged position), an image of the resurrection accompanies psalm 12 (13), that is, an image of those who still await Christ's salvation. David is inserted here to join those seeking redemption. In the first prostration miniature (Fig. 10), the biblical king is singled out in the inscription as in need of pardon for a specific sin in order to attain salvation. He kneels before Christ majestically enthroned as the supreme judge, an appropriate image to follow a scene of Christ with the choirs of the elect in paradise. David bows his head in the utmost humility, receiving pardon for his sin. In the second image of prostration (Fig. 11), he kneels closer to the ground but is now able to look up to a standing figure of Christ and receives a more general pardon, as again indicated by the inscription. The setting here is less exalted and more earthly, with the entrance to a church in the background. Again, this setting is an appropriate one to follow a scene of those who are resurrected from their tombs on earth, and, in fact, the shape of the miniature's frame echoes that of the cave of Hades.

At this point, it should be stressed that it is uncommon to find such a large number of images of David prostrating in one manuscript outside the context of psalm 50 (51), especially when the scene of prostration is repeated even within a single psalm, as for psalm 12 (13). The reader should keep in mind also that neither the psalms nor the commentary make direct reference to David's penance. In one case the meaning of the commentary is distorted in order to depict this subject. The case in question concerns the two miniatures which accompany psalm 34 (35) on folio 104 recto and verso. The first illustration depicts David's victory over Goliath (Fig. 14). The battle is shown in the customary two moments: the duel and the decapitation.<sup>63</sup> It is placed at the bottom of folio 104r, directly beneath Theodoret's preface to psalm 34 (35). The second miniature, which immediately follows the first without any intervening text, shows David once again kneeling before Christ (Fig. 15). This miniature is located at the top of folio 104v, directly above Hesychius' commentary on verse 1.

Despite the physical proximity of the first miniature to Theodoret's text, the artist followed Hesychius' commentary. In the psalm, David asks God to help him fight against his enemies. According to Hesychius, David speaks here about his chief enemy, Goliath.<sup>64</sup> The inscriptions to the first miniature read: "Goliath is fighting with David," and "David is slaying Goliath."<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> S. Wander, "The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 8 (1973), 92, fig. 5. Also, A. Cutler, "A Psalter from Mar Saba and the Evolution of the Byzantine David Cycle," *Journal of Jewish Art* 6 (1979), 54ff.

<sup>64</sup> PG 27, cols. 773–774. According to Theodoret, David speaks here not of Goliath, but of Saul: PG 80, col. 1109.

<sup>65</sup> "πολεμῶν δὲ γολιάθ μετὰ τὸν δασκαλίδα" and "ἀποκτένων δὲ δασκαλίδα τὸν γολιάθ."

The following miniature of David kneeling refers to this same commentary of Hesychius by way of its inscription. The commentary pertains to the first verse of the psalm which reads: “Judge thou, O Lord, them that injure me, fight against them that fight against me.” Hesychius explains that David asks God to help him overcome his enemies because he knows the Lord to be just.<sup>66</sup> The inscription in the miniature states: “David is praying: ‘Because thou art just and just is thy judgment.’”<sup>67</sup> The words of the commentary are put into David’s mouth. However, they are taken out of context, and the reason for David’s prayer, namely the destruction of his enemies, is not referred to in the inscription. This omission makes David’s plea less specific and allows for the interpretation that he is once again pleading for forgiveness.

The placement of this miniature immediately after the scenes of David’s heroic battle diminishes the glory of his victory. Even in victory, David is shown as in need of Christ’s mercy. The biblical narrative calls for depictions of David being praised and honored after his battle, not for an act of humility. In fact, in this manuscript there are two other places where the visual narrative of these events is considerably closer to the biblical story. Between two rows of Paschal tables on folio 2v (Fig. 16), the beheading of Goliath is followed by David’s coronation and his marriage to Saul’s daughter, Michal (1 Kings 18:27). The apocryphal psalm 151 (fols. 448v–449r; Figs. 17 and 18) is illustrated with three episodes of David’s triumphant return to Jerusalem with Goliath’s head (1 Kings 17:54, 18:6–7).

Thus, it is not simply chance that on folio 104 recto and verso David’s victory is represented in a different light. Here the scene of David’s prostration before Christ is appended to a series of narrative images without being an integral part of the biblical story. The artist uses the commentary on the psalm as an excuse to insert this unrelated image of David kneeling before Christ. Furthermore, in Hesychius’ commentary, David’s victory over Goliath is compared to Christ’s triumph over Satan. Presumably, the artist could have drawn on this part of the text and come up with a very different illustration. However, it is undeniably apparent that the relationship between text and image in this manuscript has been worked out with great care and with a specific end in mind, an end better served by the more frequent representation of David’s humility than his glorification.

To this purpose, even a New Testament verse is put into the mouth of the repenting king. The words of John the Baptist when he sees Christ for the first time, “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), are inscribed as spoken by David in a miniature depicting him with Christ (Fig. 19).<sup>68</sup> The miniature is located at the top of folio 197v, directly above Hesychios’ commentary on psalm 64 (65). Once again, David is shown prostrating himself, while Christ stands in front of a small sanctuary doorway.

The quote from the New Testament is derived from Hesychios’ interpretation of psalm 64 (65):3,<sup>69</sup> which reads: “The words of transgressors have overpowered us; but do thou pardon our sins.” In his commentary, Hesychios quotes the words uttered by

<sup>66</sup> PG 27, col. 773. “Οτι δίκαιος εί̄ κριτής.”

<sup>67</sup> “προσευχόμε(νος) δ̄ δα(νι)δ. ὅτι δίκαιος εί̄ καὶ δίκαια ἡ κρίσις σου.”

<sup>68</sup> “λέγων δ̄ δα(νι)δ δ̄ ἀμνο(ς) [τοῦ] θ(εο)ῦ δ̄ αἴρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου.”

<sup>69</sup> PG 27, col. 901.

John the Baptist, implying that “our sins” can only be pardoned by the coming of Christ to the world. The artist makes David the speaker of the words of John the Baptist, recognizing that only through Christ can he be purified. It is in psalm 50 (51) that Hesychios first connects David’s sin to the words of John the Baptist. David’s request to the Lord to cleanse him from his sin (verse 2) is interpreted by Hesychios as a supplication to the “divine and holy Lamb which takes away the lawlessness (*ἀνομία*) of this world.”<sup>70</sup>

Psalm 64 (65) marks a change from the previous miniatures of David and Christ. Although David is still humbly kneeling before Christ, beginning with the miniature for psalm 64 (65), the tone of David’s encounter with Christ takes a new turn. The transformation is from David’s passive receiving of pardon from Christ to David’s active acceptance and recognition of Christ’s authority. This is communicated through the words with which he now directly addresses Christ.<sup>71</sup> Once again the commentary is exploited for the appropriate words to direct the interpretation of the miniature.

It becomes clear that the presentation of the relationship of David and Christ in this manuscript is exceptional. Throughout the first half of the codex, whenever the biblical king is represented together with Christ, the idea of sin and forgiveness is the theme of the illustration. After psalm 50 (51), the relationship of David to Christ undergoes a transformation in which David now actively professes his recognition of Christ’s authority and saving grace. Quite often, a careful adaptation of the commentary is made to suit the dictates of an overriding program concerned with the theme of transgression and judgment.

Within the manuscript, no explicit indication is given as to what David’s sin might be. Only in psalm 50 (51) is there a clear enumeration of acts which bring about the need for David’s repentance. We have already discussed the implications of the great attention given to the sin of adultery in the illustrations of psalm 50 (51). That the adultery of Constantine IX Monomachos was a much condemned act is indisputable. But is this sufficient to account for the representation of David as a sinner throughout the manuscript? It seems that Constantine’s adultery was compounded by other transgressions considered equally inimical in the eyes of the church and its leader, Kerouarios. We need only remember Constantine’s close relationship with the Latin legates and the great annoyance this caused the patriarch who viewed Constantine as communicating with heretics. In his *Panoplia*, Kerouarios calls on the “orthodox” to avoid relations with the heretical Latins.<sup>72</sup>

If these were Constantine’s sins, the sin of Isaac I was even greater. Kerouarios’ stormy relationship with the emperor Isaac and the patriarch’s arrest and death have already been mentioned. The events immediately following the death of the patriarch in November 1058 indicate that many felt a grievous act had been committed that re-

<sup>70</sup>PG 27, col. 849.

<sup>71</sup>In the illustrations of the following psalms, David speaks his words of recognition: psalm 79 (fol. 255v), “λέ(γει) δ ὁ δα(νί)δ τὸν χ(ριστὸ)ν δ νῦν κ(ύριο)ς τῶν δυνάμεων αὐτὸς ἦν δ ποιμανῶν τὸν ἵ(σρα)ήλ”; psalm 102, fol. 313r, “λέ(γει) δ ὁ δα(νί)δ διδοὺς ἀγαθ(ὰ) τοῖς αἰτ(ο)ῦσιν αὐτὸν ἐστιν”; psalm 140, fol. 423v, “λέ(γει) δ ὁ δα(νί)δ διωκόμ(εν)o(ς) γὰρ ὑπὸ τ(o)ῦ σαοὐλ ἀντιβολεῖ τὸν θ(εό)v.”

<sup>72</sup>*Panoplia*, c. 26 in Michel, *Humbert und Kerullarios*, 244; Michel believes much of Kerouarios’ text was directed against the emperor Constantine and his dealings with the Latins in the form of his close adviser Argyros and the papal legates. Michel, “Die Echtheit,” 176–77.

quired immediate and sincere repentance. Whether or not Isaac actually had a hand in the death of Kerouarios, he demonstrated a great deal of remorse when he heard of the death. He was soon confronted by outraged church officials and others inquiring into the circumstances of Kerouarios' death.<sup>73</sup> Psellos writes that on the news of the death, ". . . his heart immediately touched, he bewailed loudly—an unusual thing for him—and mourned him sincerely. He was sorry for the way he had treated the patriarch and often tried to propitiate his soul."<sup>74</sup> Isaac had the corpse of Kerouarios brought to Constantinople with much pomp. He went to the tomb and, surrendering himself before the shroud of the dead patriarch, repented.<sup>75</sup> After a grandiose burial ceremony at the church of the Holy Angels, Kerouarios was officially recognized as a confessor.<sup>76</sup>

In Constantinople and other parts of the empire, the glorification of Kerouarios began soon after his death. Stories of holy deeds and miracles were told about him. It is mentioned that his right arm remained incorruptible in the form of a cross as if eternally blessing the people.<sup>77</sup> Kerouarios' successor, Constantine Leichoudes, instituted a yearly panegyric in his honor.<sup>78</sup> At the court, those who had sided with the emperor against the patriarch were suspended. Psellos, having drawn up the accusation against Kerouarios, had to spend some time in a monastery.<sup>79</sup> Isaac was not long in following him, retiring to the monastery of Studios in December 1059.

In light of these events, the representation of David as a sinner can be understood. As a symbolic allusion to the emperor, the sinful David expresses the contemporary attitude of the church toward the conduct of both Constantine IX and Isaac Komnenos: committing adultery, communing openly with heretics, and causing the death of the patriarch were obviously grave sins in the eyes of the church and its officials. As a stronghold of Kerouarios and the traditional seat of opposition to heretical emperors, the monastery of Studios must have seethed with righteous indignation, which may very well have resulted in the production of Vat. gr. 752.

#### SILVESTER AND OTHER BISHOPS

Various other anomalies of the psalter's illustrations support the view that the manuscript's illustrations are a critique of imperial behavior or actions. One of these anomalies is the depiction of Old Testament figures approaching a bishop in the interior of a church. The reasons for this anachronistic depiction are not found in the psalms or the commentaries which the illustrations accompany. In some notable instances, the bishops are actually identified in the inscriptions.

One such bishop is St. Silvester, appearing no fewer than eight times in the manuscript—almost as often as he occurs in the entire remaining corpus of Byzantine art. His appearance varies in the miniatures, suggesting concerns over and above reproduc-

<sup>73</sup> Michaelis Attaliotae *Historia*, Bonn ed. (1853), 64–65.

<sup>74</sup> *Chronographie*, ed. Renauld, Bk. 7, 65; Eng. trans. Sewter, *Fourteen Rulers*, 315–16.

<sup>75</sup> Skylitzes Continuatus, ed. E. Tsolakis (Thessalonike, 1968), 105; Attaliates, *Historia*, 65–66.

<sup>76</sup> L. Bréhier, *Le schisme oriental du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1899; repr. New York, 1968), 303–4.

<sup>77</sup> Attaliates, *Historia*, 66.

<sup>78</sup> Bréhier, *Le schisme*, 303–4.

<sup>79</sup> P. Joannou, "Psellos et le monastère Tà Naqooñ," *BZ* 44 (1951), 283–90.

ing standard iconography. The first illustration accompanies psalm 42 (43) on folio 142v (Fig. 20). Silvester stands before an altar, approached by David and another figure. The inscription reads: “David is saying to St. Silvester: you helped me and sheltered me.”<sup>80</sup> This is a creative adaptation of both verse 2 of psalm 42 (43) and the commentary of Hesychios on that verse.<sup>81</sup> The second example accompanies psalm 44 (45) and is on folio 148r (Fig. 21). The miniature is basically the same as the previous example, except that now David is accompanied by three figures in courtly dress. This time Silvester speaks to David: “St. Silvester is saying to David: this one is writing about the hearts of those who believe in him.”<sup>82</sup> The quote is taken from the commentary of Hesychios on the second verse of the psalm. It has been slightly adjusted and put into the mouth of Silvester instead of God the Father who is the speaker in the original text.<sup>83</sup>

This type of anachronistic depiction, along with its cryptic inscriptions, is puzzling to the uninformed viewer. Only the intended audience for this manuscript (alluded to in the dedicatory inscription) would be able to interpret these images. For the viewer looking at these images several hundred years after the production of Vat. gr. 752, the first question is why these figures were chosen. Before answering, two additional miniatures of St. Silvester will be examined.

Accompanying psalm 62 (63) on folio 193r is a miniature of St. Silvester baptizing a man who stands naked in a tall marble baptismal font (Fig. 22). Behind Silvester another figure is undressing. The inscription reads: “St. Silvester is enlightening those who sit in the dark.”<sup>84</sup> An image showing St. Silvester baptizing immediately recalls his famous baptism of Constantine the Great.<sup>85</sup> The commentary of Hesychios interprets the title of psalm 62 (63) and its first verse as referring to the sinner who is brought into the light through baptism and after baptism is able to do penance.<sup>86</sup> Appropriately the next miniature for the same psalm (fol. 193v) shows St. Silvester administering communion to a group of penitents (Fig. 23). They cover their heads with the unusual mantles also worn by those awaiting resurrection in the illustration for psalm 12 (13) (fol. 44v). St. Silvester is identified by an inscription and the penitents are named as those who (having left the darkness) come to the eternal light.<sup>87</sup>

In a general sense, these scenes involving Silvester are part of a concerted effort in this manuscript to elevate the office of the bishop. The illustrations of psalm 62 (63)

<sup>80</sup> “λέγων δὲ δα(νί)δ τὸν ἄγιον σιλβεστρον ὅτι σὺ ἐβοήθησάς με καὶ ἀπέκρυψάς με.”

<sup>81</sup> Verse 2: “Οτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Θεός κρατάωμά μου.” Commentary: “Οτι σὺ εἶ ἡ βοήθειά μου.” PG 27, col. 817.

<sup>82</sup> “λέγων δὲ ἄγιο(ς) σιλβεστρο(ς) τ(ὸν) δα(νί)δ· γράφων οὗτος πε(ρὶ) τὰς καρδ(ί)ας τ(ῶν) πιστευόντ(ων) εἰς αὐτ(ὸν).”

<sup>83</sup> PG 27, col. 825: “Ο Πατήρ λέγει: Τὸ Πνεῦμα μου τὸ ἄγιον κάλαμός ἔστι τοῦ Υἱοῦ μου· ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ γράφει τὰς καρδίας τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς αὐτόν.”

<sup>84</sup> “δὲ ἄγιο(ς) σιλβεστρο(ς) φωτ(ι)ζων τοὺς ἐν σκότῳ(ω) καθημ(ένοις).”

<sup>85</sup> That this legend was known to the Byzantines is supported by the so-called Cross of Kerouarios at Dumbarton Oaks, which shows an earlier event in the legend where Constantine goes to Silvester to have his dream explained. R. Jenkins and E. Kitzinger, “A Cross of the Patriarch Michael Cerularius,” *DOP* 21 (1967), 235–40.

<sup>86</sup> PG 27, cols. 893–896, “. . . τουτέστιν δὲ ἀμαρτωλὸς δὲ ἔξουθενημένος ὃν ἔστι τῷ κόσμῳ τῷ ἐκλείποντι, θελων ἐπιστρέψαι καὶ ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα, πάλιν μετὰ βάπτισμα ἡμαρτηκώς, καὶ θελων μετανοῆσαι λέγει τὸν ψαλμὸν τούτον.”

<sup>87</sup> “καὶ ἀπερχ(όμενοι) εἰς τὸ φῶτο(ς) τὸ αἰώνιον.”

parallel those of psalm 7 (fols. 29v and 30r) depicting Christ engaged in the same actions. In the first miniature, Christ followed by apostles is baptizing a man immersed in a tall baptismal font raised on a platform of three steps (Fig. 24). A group of men look on from the right. The inscription states: "Christ is baptizing the Jews."<sup>88</sup> The preface next to the illustration speaks of those who "would be redeemed from their sins and converted, and made worthy to stand at the right of Christ."<sup>89</sup> The second miniature shows Christ standing frontally in the center, flanked on the left by a large church with its door open, and on the right by a group of figures holding candles (Fig. 25). The mantles which cover their heads are again of the type worn by the penitents in the scene with St. Sylvester. The inscription identifies these figures as "those who in the future will be shown mercy."<sup>90</sup> The similar iconography and pairing of these two subjects of baptism and the absolving of sins either through communion or Christ's blessing in psalms 62 (63) and 7 emphasize the apostolic succession of bishops directly from Christ. Plainly stated, the bishop is depicted as a representative of Christ on earth, performing the same acts as Christ.

Why should St. Sylvester, a saint not very popular in Byzantium, be chosen as the figure to whom David goes for assistance and why does he appear more often in this manuscript than any other saint?<sup>91</sup> He seems to have been chosen as the most appropriate figure to represent the primacy of the office of the bishop, more commonly represented by St. Peter or St. Paul.<sup>92</sup> In this respect, the relationship of Sylvester with the first Christian emperor Constantine is especially important. It appears that this relationship between temporal ruler and the head of the church had a particular relevance for the mid-eleventh century. For some time now scholars have suspected that Kerouarios had knowledge of the Donation of Constantine allegedly bestowed on Pope Sylvester.<sup>93</sup> This famous pseudoact may have been brought to his attention by Cardinal Humbert during the disputes that led to the schism. The implication is that Kerouarios used the Donation to help advance the position of the patriarch vis-à-vis the emperor. Theodore Balsamon, for example, in his commentary on the Greek text of the Donation, says that some patriarchs, such as Kerouarios, attempted to apply to themselves the privileges that the Donation had given to the popes.<sup>94</sup>

Whether or not Kerouarios was directly familiar with the text of the Donation of Constantine, his actions toward the emperor Isaac Komnenos attest to his desire to

<sup>88</sup> ὁ χριστὸς βαπτίζων τοὺς ἐβραίους."

<sup>89</sup> PG 27, cols. 667–668.

<sup>90</sup> οἱ μέλλοντες ἐλεηθῆν(αι)."

<sup>91</sup> St. Sylvester appears in the illustrations to psalms 16, 31, 42, 44, 62 (twice), 94, and 104.

<sup>92</sup> At the same time, as the first pope of Rome Sylvester could be seen as representing the Western church, and scenes of Sylvester and David may refer to Constantine IX's relationship with Pope Leo IX.

<sup>93</sup> P. J. Alexander, "The Donation of Constantine at Byzantium and its Earliest Use against the Western Empire," *ZRVI* 8 (1963), 11–26, reprinted in his *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire, Selected Studies* (London, 1978), pt. IV; A. Laiou-Thomadakis, "Οἱ δύο ἔξουσίες: Ἡ διαμάχη μεταξὺ Πατῶν καὶ Αὐτοκρατόρων καὶ οἱ θεωρίες τῶν Βυζαντινῶν," *Θησαυρούματα* 15 (1978), 112. Franz Tinnefeld questions the evidence for Kerouarios' direct knowledge of the Donation, but cannot explain the patriarch's behavior. "Michael I. Kerullarios, Patriarch von Konstantinopel (1043–1058). Kritische Überlegungen zu einer Biographie," *JÖB* 39 (1989), 95–127, esp. 105–9.

<sup>94</sup> A. Gaudenzi, "Il Costituto di Constantino," *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano* 39 (1919), 70–74; Balsamon, K. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θεωρῶν καὶ ἰερῶν κανόνων*, I (Athens, 1852), 147.

elevate church over state. Having assisted Isaac in his ascension to the throne, Kerouarios was rewarded in a manner similar to Constantine's granting of special privileges to Pope Silvester. Michael Attaliates tells us:

[Isaac] relinquished to the Great Church all the rights in ecclesiastical matters which up to now were imperial matters, and these things [became] completely foreign to the palace, so that neither the office of the economy [of the church] nor that of the welfare and protection of the sacred treasures were to be administered by the emperor, but the management of persons and administration of matters were dependent upon the patriarch's power.<sup>95</sup>

This unprecedented reform significantly advanced the power of the church as an independent body. Undoubtedly, Kerouarios had long desired such power. By persuading Isaac to grant him these rights, Kerouarios insured that his absolute rule over the Byzantine church was made official and indisputable. No other patriarch before or after enjoyed such a powerful position in the Byzantine state. It is not improbable that Kerouarios, as head of the puissant church and as the maker of emperors, felt himself to be the real ruler in the state. All his enemies were crushed by this time, the clergy and the urban populace admired him as their hero, and Isaac was practically a puppet in his hands.<sup>96</sup> According to Skylitzes, Kerouarios "donned the red-colored sandals, asserting that such was the custom of the ancient priesthood, and that the archpriest should enjoy this custom in the new priesthood; for he explained that there is little or no difference between priesthood and kingdom and that the former is more worthy and more highly esteemed."<sup>97</sup> Kerouarios' infamous usurpation of the imperial insignia is just as striking today as it was in the eleventh century and bears testimony, along with his lofty statement, to his ambitions for not only himself, but the institution of the church over that of the state.

In this context, St. Silvester would be an appropriate figure to represent the transcendent church as Kerouarios envisioned it. The emperor Constantine I appeals to Silvester to advise him and cure him of his ills.<sup>98</sup> In similar fashion, Isaac depended on the counsel of Kerouarios at the beginning of his reign, not forgetting, at least at first, that he owed his throne to the patriarch. According to Attaliates, Isaac so highly respected Kerouarios that he treated him as a father.<sup>99</sup>

Immediately preceding a miniature of St. Silvester are two illustrations featuring bishops Amphilochios of Iconium and Arethas of Caesarea. Both illustrations accom-

<sup>95</sup> Attaliates, *Historia*, 60.

<sup>96</sup> H. Mädler, *Theodora, Michael Stratiotikos, Isaak Komnenos: Ein Stück byzantinischer Kaisergeschichte* (Plauen, 1894), 45; Mädler suggests that Kerouarios treated Isaac as if he were his vassal. Skylitzes further explains that Kerouarios, on at least one occasion, reminded the emperor of his debt to the patriarch. Skylitzes quotes Kerouarios' famous statement, "ἐγὼ σὲ ἔκτισα, φούσνε, καὶ ἐγὼ νὰ σὲ χαλάσω" (Skylitzes, II, 104–5).

<sup>97</sup> Skylitzes, II, 105, 1–5.

<sup>98</sup> On the Dumbarton Oaks cross, Constantine is shown before Silvester who, by showing him two icons of saints Peter and Paul, persuades him of the authenticity of the vision he had in a dream and assures him of the cure from leprosy which Peter and Paul promised him. Jenkins-Kitzinger, "Cross," 235–40; this story is found in the *Actus Silvestri*, known to the Byzantines; W. Levison, "Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvesterlegende," ST 38 (1924), 224ff.

<sup>99</sup> "τοα καὶ πατέρα ἐτίμα," *Historia*, 60.

pany psalm 16 (17) and are placed on opposite folios, Amphilochios on folio 50v and Arethas on folio 51r.

In the first illustration involving Amphilochios, the bishop holds a censer and a book and is engaged with a figure dressed as a priest, but enigmatically named in the inscription as a “spy” (Fig. 26). Both figures stand before a curtained doorway and ciborium-covered altar. The “spy” points his hands towards Amphilochios, and, as the inscription states, appears to be making inquiry to the bishop: “St. Amphilochios is being questioned by a spy.”<sup>100</sup>

The second illustration depicts Arethas seated, again in front of a ciborium-covered altar (Fig. 27a). He holds a book in his lap and raises his hand as if in a gesture of speech. Two figures, wearing courtly robes appropriate for high officials, stand before him and are identified in the inscription as Heman and Jeduthun, two of David’s singers and co-authors of the psalms. They cross their covered hands over their chests in an act of humility. The inscription states: “Heman and Jeduthun are asking St. Arethas about David.”<sup>101</sup> An odd column, which De Wald described as surmounted by a spherical object, appears between the two men and Arethas.<sup>102</sup>

Immediately below this scene, with no intervening text to separate it from the previous illustration, is the miniature which includes St. Sylvester (Fig. 27b). It is similar to the preceding illustrations in that Sylvester is addressed by three figures who stand before him, and, as in the illustration of Amphilochios, Sylvester holds censer and book. The inscription names the three figures as the sons of Korah and specifies that they are “confessing” to Sylvester.<sup>103</sup> Behind Sylvester is an architectural structure which may refer to a church. The sons of Korah are dressed in the courtly garb of the figures with Arethas and all extend their hands toward Sylvester in entreaty. Not by chance, an icon of the Virgin and Child appears in the background, appropriate to a scene of confession.

The similarities among these three illustrations are significant. In all three scenes the bishops are depicted as gray and bearded, while, except for two of the sons of Korah, the figures who come to consult are beardless and youthful. Possibly, the desired effect was that of wise old age contrasted with figures of lesser status. It is especially odd that a figure dressed as a priest should be beardless. One cannot help but think of the Byzantine criticism of Latin priests for shaving their beards.<sup>104</sup> The fact that this figure is called a “spy” makes him doubly suspect and could well be a reference to Kerouarios’ assertion that the papal legates were impostors sent by the “fraudulent Argyros.”<sup>105</sup>

In addition, in both the miniatures on folio 51r and, to a lesser degree in the preceding illustration, the men who stand before the bishops incline their heads humbly. As previously noted, Heman and Jeduthun even cover their hands in a traditional ges-

<sup>100</sup>“ὅ δ(γιος) ἀμφιλόχιο(ς) ἐρωτώμε(νος) ὑπὸ τοῦ κατασκ(ό)π(ον).”

<sup>101</sup>“ὅ νεμάν κ(αὶ) δ(ι)διθούμη ἐρωτῶν τ(όν) ἄγιον ἀρέθαν διὰ τὸν δα(υίδ).”

<sup>102</sup>De Wald, *Vat. gr. 752*, 13.

<sup>103</sup>“οἱ νιοὶ τοῦ κορέ ἔξαγορίαν ποιούμε(νοι) εἰς τ(όν) ἄγιον σιλβεστ(ρον).”

<sup>104</sup>This criticism is contained in the text of the standing synod’s anathema of the papal legates. For a partial translation, see Geanakoplos, *Byzantium*, 209–12, esp. 210; PG 120, cols. 735ff.

<sup>105</sup>The accusation, as already mentioned, is contained in the standing synod’s response to the bull of the legates, Geanakoplos, *Byzantium*, 211.

ture of humility. In all three miniatures, the inscriptions are careful to state that the men who approach the saints are in the act of entreating or consulting. Authority is on the side of the bishops. In the cases of Amphilochios and Silvester, the artist went so far as to show them as slightly taller than their companions. Care was also taken to give these figures appropriate emblems of office, ecclesiastical books and censers, and to place them within the setting in which their authority cannot be questioned, the church. The courtly garments of Heman and Jeduthun, as well as of the sons of Korah, designate these individuals as laymen. Last of all, the connection of these humble figures to David, either implied as in the Silvester miniature, or explicitly stated as in the case of the two figures with Arethas, should not go unnoticed.

We have argued that a compelling explanation for the frequent appearance of Silvester in the illustrations of the manuscript lies in contemporary events of the mid-eleventh century, specifically the use of the Donation of Constantine by Kerouarios. By placing Amphilochios and Arethas in two miniatures immediately preceding one of Silvester, the aim was obviously to liken the two Eastern saints to Silvester as equally authoritative and powerful in their relations with the state. The lives of these two bishops reveal that both at some point asserted their power over erring emperors.

As a staunch upholder of Orthodoxy, Amphilochios opposed Arianism in the fourth century.<sup>106</sup> In particular, he petitioned Emperor Theodosios (379–395) to forbid assemblies of the Arians, but was refused. As a result, the rebuffed prelate went to the palace and, in the presence of Theodosios and his son Arcadius (recently proclaimed co-emperor), failed to greet the son in the proper manner. When rebuked by the emperor for his lack of respect, Amphilochios is said to have replied to the effect that, if the emperor could not bear a slight to his son, how then could he allow others to dishonor the Son of God?<sup>107</sup> Allegedly, the emperor was so struck by this reply that he subsequently enacted a law which forbade assemblies of Arians.

Through this incident Amphilochios acquired a certain popularity; the way in which he chastised the emperor assumed legendary dimension for later generations.<sup>108</sup> Presumably, the inclusion of Amphilochios in Vat. gr. 752 was informed by the saint's reputation for standing up to the emperor and against heretical movements. The "knowledgeable" viewer mentioned in the dedicatory inscription might then draw parallels between Amphilochios and the patriarch Kerouarios, both called upon to stand up to emperors who lean in the direction of heresy.<sup>109</sup>

Arethas, a disciple of the patriarch Photios (involved in the first schism between East and West), similarly pitted himself against the emperor Leo VI (886–912) in the dispute over Leo's fourth marriage. In fact, Arethas lead the attack against Leo in this affair.<sup>110</sup> In a letter concerning the fourth marriage, Arethas proposed a penance for the emperor as follows: ". . . we shall set him by the door of the church, the duration of the

<sup>106</sup> He was an important participant in the council of 381 at Constantinople.

<sup>107</sup> PG 39, col. 25.

<sup>108</sup> K. Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium* (Darmstadt, 1969), 42.

<sup>109</sup> There is also evidence that Kerouarios may have used the writings of Amphilochios on the nature of the Trinity, in order to support his stance on the filioque. Michel, *Humbert und Kerullarios*, II, 226. Compare Amphilochios' discussion in PG 39, col. 112 with that of Kerouarios in his *Panoplia*, published by Michel, *Humbert und Kerullarios*, 226.

<sup>110</sup> P. Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism*, trans. by H. Lindsay and A. Moffatt (Canberra, 1986), 240–41.

service, on his knees, to entreat those who go in.”<sup>111</sup> The image elicited is not unlike the numerous images of the prostrating David in Vat. gr. 752. In another letter written to Leo by the then-exiled Arethas, the aggressive bishop implies that if Leo allows him to be judged unfairly at his trial, the emperor will have to repent at the final judgment of Christ.<sup>112</sup> Again, the parallels between the actions of Arethas and those of Kerouarios are undeniable. Both opposed the emperor and as a result were exiled and brought to trial (although Kerouarios dies before the actual trial can take place, and Arethas later changes his tune and supports the legitimacy of Leo’s marriage).

Thus, both Amphilochios and Arethas exemplify the powerful church leader who is unwavering in his fight against heresy and unorthodox behavior, even when his pious defense of the faith brings him into conflict with the emperor himself. They appear in the illustrations of Vat. gr. 752 as models or precursors for Kerouarios in his struggle with Latin heresy and his resulting acts of defiance toward Constantine IX Monomachos.

#### CONCLUSION

This article has examined a number of unusual illustrations of the psalter Vat. gr. 752 and argued for an historical framework in which to understand these images. It should be stressed that we see this study as only a beginning in the process of unraveling the puzzle of Vat. gr. 752. Traditional approaches to this manuscript have not yielded satisfactory solutions for the problematic images. In fact, this article is the first to address the ambiguous content of the illustrations and to propose suggestions to help understand the iconography and the possible intentions of the manuscript’s composers. Our method takes into account the unusual nature of this manuscript’s illustrations: the use of a specially created catena for the inspiration of the miniatures, that is, a text other than that of the psalms themselves, the exceptional characterization of the Old Testament king David, and the choice of figures rarely depicted in Byzantine art. Although there is no way to prove incontrovertibly that the interpretation presented here is the way the images were meant to be understood, we believe that the issues raised by the images are strikingly relevant to the religious and political concerns of the mid-eleventh century. There can be little question that in terms of iconography David is repeatedly shown as a sinful ruler. In addition, the church is represented by specific bishops who are exemplary in their upholding of Orthodoxy against the wantonness of erring emperors. And something not discussed in this article is the fact that a number of illustrations in Vat. gr. 752 address issues of liturgical and theological correctness brought up by the debates between East and West.<sup>113</sup> The schism of 1054 made it imperative that the church act decisively in all matters of heresy both within the Eastern church and coming from the West. Within this atmosphere the transgressions of Constantine IX Monomachos and Isaac I Komnenos were not to be taken lightly. Studites

<sup>111</sup> Translated by P. Karlin-Hayter, “Texts for the Historical Study of the Vita Euthymii,” *Byzantion* 28 (1958), 387.

<sup>112</sup> P. Karlin-Hayter, “Arethas, Choirosphactes and the Saracen Vizir,” *Byzantion* 35 (1965), 458.

<sup>113</sup> Some illustrations show David or others taking communion, the leavened bread prominently displayed. In addition, the frequent appearance of the sons of Korah has to be seen in light of their role as the first schismatics, as interpreted by St. Cyprian.

like Niketas Stethatos took it upon themselves to censure imperial behavior. The Studios monastery, following its traditional role as the protector of Orthodoxy in times of imperial laxity, may very well have been the place of production of Vat. gr. 752.<sup>114</sup> Keroularios, perhaps with the monastery's reputation in mind, used it as his powerbase. After his death, the monastery may have felt a need to assert the authoritarian position of the church in terms very close to those laid out in the so-called *Epanagoge*: "to bring back those who have gone astray, to judge gently and be severe to the disobedient regardless of their station in life, to interpret the canons, and to speak without timidity before the emperor for the truth and defense of the holy dogmas."<sup>115</sup> We believe that the illustrations of the psalter Vat. gr. 752 express these concerns.

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<sup>114</sup>On the basis of style, Kurt Weitzmann has also connected the Vatican psalter with the Studios monastery in "An Imperial Lectionary in the Monastery of Dionysius on Mount Athos: Its Origins and its Wanderings," *RESEE* 7 (1969), 247–48.

<sup>115</sup>As summarized by N. G. Itsines, "Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos," in *Byzantine Ecclesiastical Personalities* (Brookline, Mass., 1975), 56 note 83. Tit. III, pars. 2, 4, 5, in Zepos, *Jus*, II, 242.